

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
THE UTAH CENTER FOR LEGAL INCLUSION



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UCLI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to UCLI's first issue of our newsletter Mosaic!

It is truly a privilege and honor to lead and support the mission of the Utah Center for Legal Inclusion (UCLI) as its executive director. Thanks to the great passion and commitment of many amazing leaders from law firms, courts, law schools, governmental legal organizations, and the business community, Utah finally has a comprehensive, state-wide body that is dedicated to engaging our underrepresented populations in the legal profession.

As it stands, Utah's legal community is quite homogeneous despite the relatively diverse Utah demographics. For example, the latest data from 2011 and 2016 show that, women constitute only 24% of the Utah bar. Also, while 22.8% of Utahns identified as ethnically and/or racially diverse, only 7% of Utah legal practitioners were minorities. The presence of other diverse demographics, especially in positions of leadership, is similarly scarce.

In my experience as a lawyer in this community, I know that our community wants to do better. Our colleagues across the ideological spectrum came together to form UCLI because they recognized that, not only does homogeneity diminish the public's trust in the legal system, but our profession also suffers as we miss out on incredible talent, opportunities for a better work product, and the ability to fully respond to the needs of our community, employees and clients.

To effect change, we must be intentional and take action. UCLI is doing that, among other things, by:

- (1) promoting legal education and providing mentoring and financial support to diverse groups across Utah, with the goal that, some day, many of them will join us as colleagues and as leaders in their own communities;
- (2) working with legal employers as a resource to enhance their efforts to increase workplace diversity and inclusion and welcome and advance the diverse talent; and
- (3) enhancing the administration of and access to justice for Utah's underrepresented, underserved, and marginalized populations.



Pictured: UCLI Executive Director, Aida Neimarlija, Esq.

Our aspiration is that, together, we can build a beautiful mosaic wherein members of Utah's diverse and underrepresented communities can be seen, heard, and valued in Utah's legal system and institutions. I invite you to be intentional about creating and seizing opportunities where you can step up as a mentor, sponsor, and perhaps even be a champion for a diverse student or attorney. UCLI has many wonderful projects that allow each of us to make a difference.

On behalf of UCLI, thank you for your generosity of time, passion, and funding to help develop our programs and build the infrastructure necessary to bring about a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive Utah. I am a strong believer that, as with many other important efforts, Utah can be a trailblazer in effectively engaging diverse voices in our legal profession, thanks to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Aida Neimarlija". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional but personal style.

Aida Neimarlija, Esq.
UCLI Executive Director

UTAH BAR REVIEW DIVERSITY & INCLUSION SCHOLARSHIP SUCCESS

by Ling Ritter, UCLI Assistant Director

May of this year marked the **launch of the first-ever Utah Bar Review Diversity and Inclusion Scholarships** for recent law school graduates, a collaborative effort of the Utah Center for Legal Inclusion (UCLI), the Young Lawyers Division of the Utah State Bar (YLD) and the law firm of Holland & Hart which provided seed funding for an inaugural scholarship recipient and hosted the kick-off reception.

The scholarship is aimed at expanding opportunity for aspiring attorneys with diverse backgrounds by awarding financial assistance for costs associated with the Utah State Bar Exam. Accordingly, scholarship recipients must demonstrate financial need as well as a strong history of serving Utah's diverse communities and a passion for bringing about an equitable and inclusive future for Utah's legal profession and institutions.

The effort to establish the Diversity & Inclusion Scholarship was led by Holland & Hart associate Chelsea Davis. Drawing upon her prior experience as a law student from a diverse background and upon research showing clear disparities in bar passage rates, Davis was motivated to create the scholarship as a step in the right direction toward closing the opportunity gap facing diverse law students.

"This scholarship has received astounding support from the legal community, and it shows how much and how quickly we can make a difference toward promoting diversity when we all work together toward a common goal."

-- Chelsea Davis, Holland & Hart

Law students **Athelia Graham** (BYU J. Reuben Clark Law School '19), **Jonathan McClurg** (BYU J. Reuben Clark Law School '19), and **Carlos Quijada** (University of Utah SJ Quinney College of Law '19) comprise the inaugural class of Utah Bar Review Diversity & Inclusion Scholarship recipients. From assisting immigrants and asylum-seekers and advocating for underrepresented minorities, to representing the interests of veterans and members of tribal nations, the commitment to Utah's diverse and marginalized populations that these recipients demonstrate is extensive and inspiring. *(Continued on next page)*



Pictured: **Carlos Quijada** (left), Legal Honors Attorney at U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; **Jonathan McClurg** (middle), Assistant Staff Judge Advocate at United States Air Force; **Athelia Graham** (right), Galbraith Fellow at the Rocky Mountain Innocence Center

This featured image and additional information about the scholarship were provided to UCLI by Chelsea Davis, Associate Attorney at Holland & Hart. This article includes details from the scholarship recipient's biographies and the Holland & Hart press release about the scholarship, which can be read [HERE](#).


Cont.: What's more, these incredible scholarship winners recently met an important milestone this past October, when **all three recipients passed the bar exam** and were admitted to practice in the state of Utah. We cannot wait to see what awaits for these emerging leaders making change in our community.

UCLI sends our **congratulations and well wishes** to the Utah Bar Review Diversity and Inclusion Scholarship recipients and extends our sincere **gratitude** to those organizations and individuals who have worked to bring this opportunity to fruition. For more information about our scholarship programs, contact Cheryl Mori at moric@sec.gov.

HELP US SUSTAIN & GROW PROGRAMS LIKE THIS

Donate at www.utahcli.org/donate or Become a Founding Sponsor

Through UCLI's Founding Sponsorships, organizations can invest into and support our common goal of diversifying the legal profession. The sponsorship can also demonstrate to our community, and organizations' current and potential clients and employees a commitment to making Utah's legal profession more equitable, diverse, and inclusive.



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- A full-page ad in a major Utah publication of your choice
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- 2 tables at 2 UCLI 2020 events
- Up to 3 CLE presentations on diversity & inclusion
- Representation on UCLI's Advisory Board from 2020-2022

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- A 1/2-page ad in Utah Business Magazine; full-page ads in UCLI's Annual Report and 2020-21 main event programs
- Opportunity for a 2-min presentation at a UCLI's 2020 major event
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- 1 table at 2 events of your choice held by UCLI in 2020 (8 seats for each event)
- Exclusive Attendee/Host of 2 events with diverse GC, minority/women groups, or students in 2020
- Two management trainings/consultations re: diversity & inclusion

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- 6 tickets to 2 main events held by UCLI in 2020
- Up to 2 CLE presentations to your organization related to diversity & inclusion
- Opportunity to sponsor joint promotional items with UCLI's name

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- A 1/4-page ad in UCLI's 2020 Annual Report and two 2020 main event programs
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- 1 CLE presentation in 2020 and discounts on UCLI trainings
- Opportunity to attend/host/ sponsor event with UCLI (women's groups, diverse GC luncheons, students etc.)

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- Discounts on trainings and/or consultations to strengthen your workplace diversity & inclusion efforts

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\$2,500 or \$400/attorney**

- Permanent recognition of your sponsorship and link to your website on UCLI's website
- Recognition on UCLI's Founding Sponsors' Wall of Fame
- 2 tickets to 1 UCLI main event in 2020
- Access to UCLI resources; receipt of UCLI Annual Reports and Tracking Progress updates on diversity in Utah's legal profession

Additional terms may apply. For any questions, please email utah.ucli@gmail.com or call Aida at 801-746-5221.

For more information or to become a UCLI Founding Sponsor, contact our Executive Director, Aida Neimarlija, at aida@neimarlaw.com.

A MESSAGE FROM A LAW STUDENT: ALEXANDER SÁNCHEZ

by **Alexander Alberto Sánchez, Second Year Law Student at the University of Utah S.J. Quinney College of Law**

When I was five-years-old, my family and I relocated to Salt Lake City, Utah, in hopes of starting a new life. At the time, my mother and father were in search of affordable living and better employment opportunities outside of California. Due to the Salvadoran Civil War of the 1980's, my parents migrated to the United States as undocumented immigrants. The initial socio-economic and cultural disadvantages my parents faced in a new country, prevented them from introducing me to more effective educational tools needed to succeed academically throughout my primary education.

As the oldest son in my family, navigating through school life and my responsibilities at home did not come naturally. Growing up, my parents were often left with no choice but to rely on me to care for my younger siblings while they worked. At age seven, translating documents and interpreting phone calls for my parents became a common task. And due to the language barrier that my parents faced, I was often unable to ask them for assistance on assignments and was left to figure things out on my own. I never knew how to seek out assistance in school and, for some time, I was able to get by on my own. As a first-generation college student, the challenges I faced at home and at school were very stressful and they made me grow as a person, especially when navigating through two different cultural worlds.

"As a first-generation college student, the challenges I faced at home and in school were very stressful and they made me grow as a person, especially when navigating through two different cultural worlds."

-- Alexander Sánchez



Pictured: **Alexander Sánchez**, S.J. Quinney 2L and Vice President of the First Generation Law Students Organization

The thought of college seemed unrealistic to me and was not a thought I had fully entertained until my senior year of high school. The idea of attending college only came after my high school guidance counselor asked me what my future plans were after graduation. This was the first time I had ever spoken with anyone about pursuing a higher education and the first time anyone had ever asked me about it. This counselor became my mentor and she assisted me greatly in getting sponsored into the University of Utah, through a program ran by the Center for Ethnic Student Affairs. Every year, the center would sponsor only 100 students. The program was intended to provide academic opportunities to those underrepresented students who did not meet the initial admission criteria, but who demonstrated academic potential.

One year later, that same mentor wrote a recommendation letter that dramatically helped me in being selected as a full-ride scholarship recipient. I was fortunate enough to receive the Gail and Larry H. Miller Enrichment Scholarship, which covered my undergraduate tuition completely. The directors of this scholarship also provided me with an overwhelming amount of support and guidance. *(Continued on next page)*

Nonetheless, I was clueless as to what steps to take in pursuing a legal education and did not personally know of any attorneys or judges that looked like me or of anyone that I could get in touch with. Through a family friend, I was able to obtain a temporary position at the firm, Brown, Bradshaw & Moffat. This was my first time being introduced to a law office and the first time I was able to work with attorneys. I knew very little about the law, but the attorneys were willing to give me an opportunity to learn and to prove myself. The genuine support and feedback that I received from these mentors further inspired me to apply to law school.

A year ago, I was debating whether I should move to Moscow, Idaho to finally pursue my dream of becoming an attorney. The thought of leaving my loved ones behind to relocate to a small town located in the panhandle of Idaho was daunting. Yet, when given the chance to pursue my calling, it was all the motivation I needed to move out-of-state. Although I flourished academically at the University of Idaho College of Law, I missed Salt Lake and the legal network I used to be a part of. After my first-year law grades were posted, I decided it would be worth a shot to attempt to transfer down to the University of Utah's S.J. Quinney College of Law. As a transfer student, I thought I would have a better chance of being accepted at the law school for my second year, since only my first-year grades were being considered as opposed to my initial average LSAT score. Fortunately, I was accepted as a transfer student this year.

The same summer that I applied to transfer to S.J. Quinney College of Law, I was given the opportunity to work for the firm, Conyers & Nix, as a law clerk. This opportunity was invaluable as the attorneys allowed me to shadow them in court, in jail, and in the holding cells. I was also given wide latitude to work on the preparation of several criminal trials for our clients. I am grateful that these attorneys took a chance with me and that they were willing to take the time out of their busy schedules to show me what they know and how they apply that knowledge. This mentorship allowed me to get a better sense of what a practicing criminal defense attorney does on a daily basis in and outside of the office.

Prior to attending college, I had not realized the importance of having role models. Without all of the amazing mentors in my life, I cannot confidently say that I would be in law school or in the same academic position as I am now. I strongly believe in the importance of role models for younger students that are pursuing a legal education, particularly those students that are first-generation and have no one in their family who has ever attended college, let alone law school. Many of these first-generation college students are in great need of mentorships that will provide them with guidance on how to navigate the law school application process, pursue academic advising, and seek out financial assistance.

"Without all of the amazing mentors in my life, I cannot confidently say that I would be in law school . . . I strongly believe in the importance of role models for younger students that are pursuing a legal education, particularly those students that are first-generation and have no one in their family who has ever attended college, let alone law school."

-- Alexander Sánchez

My goal is to eventually work as a public defender for the Salt Lake Legal Defender Association and to one day practice immigration law. As a first-generation college student, I am proud of myself for completing my first year of law school. My first year made me grow as a person and made me realize that persistence and hard work can pay off, but only if you are willing to make sacrifices. I never thought it would be possible to attend law school and I am grateful to the many people in my life who have opened up so many doors for me. It really does take a village to raise a child, or in my case it has taken a village to get me this far in my education.

Know a law student who should be featured in the next issue of *Mosaic*?
Email us at ucli@utahcli.org.

UCLI KICKS OFF ITS CLE SERIES AND THE 2020 CERTIFICATION PROGRAM AT THE FEDERAL COURTHOUSE

by Jonathan Hafen, UCLI CLE Chair

On October 4, 2019, UCLI held its big CLE **kickoff event** and unveiled the **UCLI Certification Program** at the Salt Lake City federal courthouse. **Over 200 leaders from the Utah legal community**, including over 30 state and federal court judges, the Utah Bar President, and the Utah Attorney General, attended a fascinating three-hour Continuing Legal Education (CLE) presentation by a nationally-recognized judicial trainer, **Kimberly Papillon**, on the topic of *Neuroscience of Decision-Making in Leadership: Meaningful Updates and Concrete Solutions*.

Ms. Papillon's presentation addressed how and why our brains develop cognitive biases and how such biases can affect moral intuitions and ethical decisions with respect to our treatment of employees, colleagues, clients, defendants, witnesses, and others we encounter in the legal profession. Ms. Papillon also provided the attendees with strategies for combatting biases, becoming more inclusive, and ensuring that ethical approaches are applied in the workplace and other environments.

Utah Rules of Professional Conduct recognize that elimination and interruption of bias in the legal profession is central to our ability to ethically apply the law and serve our community. Rule 8.4 specifically prohibits attorneys from engaging in "conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice." The comment to Rule 8.4 further explains that this includes attorneys who "knowingly manifest[] **by words or conduct bias or prejudice based upon race, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status**....when such actions are prejudicial to the administration of justice." See cmt. to Utah R. Prof. Conduct, Rule 8.4 (Dec. 19, 2018) (emphasis added).

Rule 2.3 of Canon 2 of the Utah Code of Judicial Conduct similarly provides that "[a] **judge shall perform the duties of judicial office, including administrative duties, without bias or prejudice**.... [and that a] judge shall not, in the performance of judicial duties, **by words or conduct manifest bias or prejudice or engage in harassment, including but not limited to bias, prejudice, or harassment based upon race, sex, gender, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, socioeconomic status, or political affiliation, and shall not permit court staff, court officials, or others subject to the judge's direction and control to do so.**" (emphasis added).

Ms. Papillon also focused on retention and advancement challenges that legal employers encounter with respect to women and diverse attorneys, and she discussed creative solutions to tackling the challenges and effecting change from the top down in our legal institutions. Judge Robert J. Shelby of the United States District Court for the District of Utah then addressed the attendees and spoke of the importance of engaging our diverse populations in the legal profession and eliminating bias in our administration of justice.

Following the presentation, the guests attended UCLI's Leadership Reception where the Utah Supreme Court Justice Paige Petersen and Utah Bar President Herm Olsen gave remarks about UCLI's mission and programs. Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes announced that his office would be the first to enroll in the UCLI 2020 Certification Program and expressed the commitment of the AG's Office to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

UCLI thanks Anne Morgan, Judge Shelby, Judge Nuffer and the federal court staff for hosting this important event. UCLI also thanks our co-hosts the Federal Bar Association and the Women Lawyers of Utah, and our generous sponsors, listed below, for making this event possible. (See photos on next page)

UCLI invites our community's ideas and involvement in developing our CLE program.
Please contact Jon Hafen at jhafen@parrbrown.com.



Pictured (left): October 4 CLE Guest Speaker,
Kimberly Papillon, Esq.



Pictured (right): October 4 CLE
Reception attendees



Pictured (left): October 4 CLE Guest Speaker,
Kimberly Papillon, Esq. with **US District Court**
Judge Robert J. Shelby

UCLI SENDS ITS DEEPEST THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS OF THE KICKOFF CLE EVENT & LEADERS' RECEPTION!

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MENTORING TASK FORCE TAKES OFF IN UTAH'S SCHOOLS

by Melinda Bowen, UCLI Co-President

Beginning in March 2019, UCLI assembled a group of attorneys and judges to serve as the **UCLI Mentoring Task Force**. Over the past several months, the Task Force has begun efforts to create an **evidence-based, comprehensive mentoring program** to benefit diverse Utah students beginning in K-12 schools and continuing through the early years of legal practice.

To lay the groundwork for this program, the Task Force enlisted law students to research best practices among various mentoring initiatives. Based on the research, the Task Force plans to utilize a **team mentoring approach**, with the aim of facilitating opportunities for each student-mentee to develop ongoing relationships and to build a broad professional network that can provide helpful resources throughout all stages of the educational process. The Task Force has begun its efforts by testing certain ideas in a pilot program scheduled to run through the 2019-2020 school year. The Task Force is excited to report on the following efforts that highlight the work of our volunteers thus far.

"[T]he Task Force plans to utilize a team mentoring approach, with the aim of facilitating opportunities for each student-mentee to develop ongoing relationships and to build a broad professional network that can provide helpful resources throughout all stages of the educational process."

-- Melinda Bowen

First, volunteers have connected with students at multiple K-12 schools around the state to begin exposing students to the law and the legal profession. Sean Brown, Andy Morelli, and Melina Shiraldi visited a sixth grade class at Meadowlark Elementary School. During their time with the class, these three attorneys shared their personal stories, their experiences as they made the journey through law school, and their insights about specific legal careers. *(Continued on next page)*



Pictured: Mentoring Task Force volunteers **Melinda Bowen** and **Melina Shiraldi** presenting at a Latinos in Action class at Alta High School

The experience, however, was not limited to the classroom; the volunteers also joined the kids in a kickball game at recess. And the students' exposure to the law will not end with the classroom presentation and the kickball game. The class has scheduled a field trip to the University of Utah this spring, with a guided tour of the law school as a special highlight.

I also visited St. Francis Xavier Catholic School, where I spoke with students in both elementary and middle school classes, and guided interactive presentations on the law as a profession and specifically on the First Amendment and its relevance to current events.

Melina Shiraldi and I provided similar presentations at Alta High School, where we visited for Constitution Day. The Alta event included three separate discussions: one with a larger group of students during an advisory period, along with two smaller classroom presentations in a Latinos in Action class and in a Legal Research class.

Before the end of the school year, one of these classes will also take a tour of a local court, with the hope of further exposing students to different aspects of the legal profession. In the coming months, volunteers will also coordinate with personnel at East High School and Valley High School to schedule similar presentations at these schools, and to begin developing a long-term program that will provide schools with a list of potential events and resources that the UCLI Mentoring Program can offer to each school that chooses to utilize our volunteers.

In the realm of undergraduate students, UCLI has begun meeting with contacts at both the University of Utah and Brigham Young University, to develop relationships with existing undergraduate programs where UCLI volunteers can lend support. Similar meetings are in the works with other schools, such as Utah State and Weber State Universities.

The Task Force has also begun its **mentoring efforts** with college and law students. **Julie Nelson** recently joined as the Chair of the college student tier and is building strong ties with diverse college groups across the state. Under the direction of **Heather Thuet**, the law student tier Chair, and thanks to the generous \$1,500 sponsorship by the Litigation Section of the Utah State Bar, four law student UCLI mentees from both the University of Utah and BYU law schools attended the **Litigation Section's Judicial Excellence CLE and Shenanigans** in Moab in October. The Task Force extends a very special thanks to the Litigation Section for making this opportunity possible for our students!

The Task Force is anxious to continue these and similar efforts, and to build on them over the coming months. The full UCLI Mentoring Program will launch at the beginning of The 2020-2021 school year. **We are thrilled about the Mentoring Program and the results we've seen thus far, and we'd love to have you aboard. Sign up today!**



Pictured: Mentoring Task Force volunteers **Melina Shiraldi, Andy Morelli, and Sean Brown** presenting at Meadowlark Elementary

Interested in volunteering with the outreach program, serving as a mentor, or becoming a planning committee member for the Mentoring Program? Sign up [HERE](#) or contact Melinda Bowen (mwayas@gmail.com) or Kristen Olsen (olsen.kristen@dorsey.com) for more information.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE HARNESSES THE POWER IN PROXIMITY

by **Kate Conyers, UCLI Proximity Task Force Chair, Development Committee Co-Chair, and Women Lawyers of Utah Representative**

Earlier this year, on October 31, 2019, three members of **UCLI's "Get Proximate" Task Force** met up at the new Volunteers of America Geraldine E. King Women's Resource Center, just off of 700 South and State Street. As part of this service project, volunteer attorneys helped prepare sides for the lunchtime meal, served lunch to approximately 200 shelter residents, and cleaned up the kitchen and washed dishes.

One volunteer, Kristen Olsen from Dorsey, stated the following about the experience:



Pictured: **Kristen Olsen**, UCLI Co-President and Proximity Taskforce Volunteer

"It was very rewarding to volunteer at the women's shelter on an otherwise hectic day at work. I loved connecting with the residents and seeing first-hand how the shelter operates. I learned a lot about the needs and circumstances of the residents, the shelter, and the homeless community at large."



Pictured: **Kate Conyers** and **Rohit Raghavan**, UCLI Proximity Task Force Volunteers

"I learned a lot about the needs and circumstances of the residents, the shelter, and the homeless community at large."

-- **Kristen Olsen, UCLI Co-President and Proximity Task Force Volunteer**

The residents were very thankful for the volunteers' time; many personally thanked each of the volunteers for their efforts. It was a great team building activity! *(Continued on next page)*

The "Get Proximate" Taskforce has several initiatives whereby attorneys are offered valuable opportunities to serve and interact with homeless and other underserved and marginalized populations in Salt Lake County. The Taskforce has served meals at the Women's Resource Center and the Homeless Youth Resource Center and will offer other opportunities in the future.

The idea underlying the spirit of the Proximity Task Force is best summarized by the civil rights advocate, Bryan Stevenson:

"To make a difference in creating a healthier community, a healthier society, and healthier nation and thus a healthier economy, **we've got to find ways to get proximate to the poor and the vulnerable.** I absolutely believe that **when we isolate ourselves, when we allow ourselves to be shielded and disconnected from those who are**

vulnerable and disfavored we sustain and contribute to these problems. I am persuaded that **in proximity there is something we can learn about how we change the world, how we change the environment, how we create healthier communities.** I'm actually persuaded that **there's power in proximity. . . .** I'm persuaded that **we've got to find ways to get closer to the disfavored, the marginalized, the excluded, the poor, the disabled.** Even if we don't have any answers about what we're going to do when we get there. **The power is in proximity."**

— Brian Stevenson, Civil Rights Advocate

For additional information about Stevenson's views on proximity, see [HERE](#).

If your group or firm would like to volunteer with or start a new "Get Proximate" project, please email Kate Conyers (kate@conyersnix.com). Thank you!



ATTORNEY PROFILE: KIM CORDOVA

by **Marshall Thompson, UCLI Communications Director**

Kim Cordova, the Executive Director of the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ), is responsible for coordinating and implementing criminal justice policy in Utah—a monumental task that requires her to work with all three branches of the government, shape legislation, and craft innovative policy initiatives. She draws on her unique life experiences as well as her expertise in criminal law to make Utah a safer and more equitable place to live and work.

But, **Cordova almost didn't become a criminal lawyer. When she was younger, she did not know any lawyers or professionals.** As a result, she didn't initially consider a career in the legal field.

"My mom is an **immigrant** and all of her family is still in Korea," Cordova said. "And on my Dad's side, there were unhealthy, dysfunctional family patterns . . . I knew that was not what I wanted."

Even early on in elementary school, **Cordova recognized that education would be the key to achieving what she wanted.** Her mother left for work every morning at 4:30 a.m. after making meals for the children. Cordova was responsible for getting herself up, getting ready for the day, doing her homework, and walking to and from school. Her precocious independence and hard work was not lost on her teachers.

"My elementary school teachers took an interest in me, and I did well in school," she said. "I can name them all—that's how important and influential they were. They reinforced that I could do anything."

After graduating from high school, Cordova was one of the few in her graduating class who went on to college. She attended Westminster College with an eye toward medical school, but her true love was the humanities. She found a middle ground in psychology.



Pictured: **Kim Cordova**, Executive Director of the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ)

"My elementary school teachers took an interest in me, and I did well in school," she said. "I can name them all—that's how important and influential they were. They reinforced that I could do anything."

-- Kim Cordova

After graduating, Cordova worked as a counselor in youth corrections and then transferred to youth probation. Her plan was to get experience in counseling and then pursue a graduate degree in psychology. In youth probation, she worked closely with **Judge Andrew Valdez**, a juvenile court judge. Judge Valdez had been a criminal defense attorney and was one of the first Latinx persons appointed to the Utah bench. *(Continued on next page)*

"He called me into his chambers one day and said, 'What are you doing?'" Cordova remembers. He told her that she needed to take the LSAT and go to law school. "He told me I could be a great lawyer," she said.

"He [Judge Andrew Valdez] told me I could be a great lawyer."

-- Kim Cordova

That slight nudge was all that Cordova needed, and she was soon enrolled in the University of Utah law school. During law school, she found that she was drawn toward the subjects that most affected vulnerable people in tough situations.

"Contracts, property, torts. None of that stuff remotely interested me," Cordova said. "Parental rights, death penalty, fifth amendment, Miranda, constitutional law—that was interesting. She also made friends for life.

"I think there were approximately 120 in my class. There were only about six of us that were students of color. Somehow, we all found each other that first week. I still know how they all are . . . They were really my source of support the first year. We did everything together."

After graduating, Cordova built on the friendships she made in law school to form a strong, professional support group.

"Those relationships that began in law school, we continued to be connected and support each other over the past two decades," Cordova said. "Whenever we've met any other women and women of color who we could connect with professionally, we have taken them in and brought them along with us. So our support group consistently grows."

Cordova went on to intern at the Salt Lake County District Attorney's Office and to clerk for Judge Judith Atherton, who is currently the chair of CCJJ. After clerking, Cordova went to work as a prosecutor in Salt Lake County. In 2009, Cordova had been with Salt Lake County for almost 10 years, she was looking for new growth and new experiences.

She knew Ed Brass, an experienced defense attorney, from her work as a prosecutor. Brass asked her if she wanted to work with him.

"Again, there was another person, another mentor, who saw something special about me who influenced another career path," Cordova said. "I learned a ton. I was able to practice across the state in justice, district, and federal court."

Walking into courts where she was unknown in different parts of Utah was an eye opening experience, Cordova said. "I was consistently referred to as the interpreter. For everyone who didn't know me, the first question was, 'Are you the interpreter?'"

"I was consistently referred to as the interpreter. For everyone who didn't know me, the first question was, 'Are you the interpreter?'"

-- Kim Cordova

Once court personnel and other lawyers got to know Cordova, however, things were different. "After we were able to show our level of ability and professionalism, I was greeted much better."

Brass said that working with Cordova improved his practice of the law. "Through the force of her personality, she compelled me to be the best lawyer I could be every day," he said. "Her commitment to people who would otherwise be forgotten or neglected burns in her."

"[Cordova] compelled me to be the best lawyer I could be every day. Her commitment to people who would otherwise be forgotten or neglected burns in her."

-- Ed Brass, Criminal Defense Attorney

(Continued on next page)

After practicing with Brass for many years, another mentor, Ron Gordon, general counsel to Governor Herbert, nudged Cordova to a different path. After getting to know Cordova during her service on the Third District Judicial Nominating Commission, which Gordon staffed for the Governor, he tapped her to take his recently vacated position as Executive Director of CCJJ.

"She took her statutory charge to nominate the five most qualified candidates seriously and approached that charge with an incredible perspective that included both the importance of the Judiciary as a whole and the importance of justice in individual cases," Gordon said.

He continued, "I always appreciated listening to her talk about the candidates because of her ability to analyze the big picture without ever losing sight of the work that goes on in individual courtrooms every day and the impact that has on the people appearing in those courtrooms. She brings that same perspective to everything she does which makes her an excellent leader and an incredible asset to the State."

"[Cordova is] an excellent leader and an incredible asset to the State."

**-- Ron Gordon, General Counsel
to Governor Herbert**

Brass is equally pleased to see how well Cordova is now serving the State of Utah in her new position. **"She now raises the level of the system as a whole the way she once raised our law practice,"** he said.

Cordova believes that you have to pay attention to mentors who offer timely opportunities and build on connections to help improve diversity and inclusion in Utah's legal profession.

"We have to have connections," she said. "I'm a firm believer that as you move ahead as a person of color, as a woman, you have to open doors and bring people with you."

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-- Kim Cordova

Even though many challenges lie ahead, Cordova is optimistic about the future of diversity and inclusion in Utah. "When we're talking about diversity on the bench, the way that women lawyers are organizing and supporting women, I think it's had a tremendous effect" she said. "I also think the Governor has put people in positions who understand and appreciate the value of diversity."

The important thing to Cordova is that groups like UCLI and others continue to drive the conversation forward about diversity and inclusion.

"These are things about ourselves and our society that we constantly have to be aware of, that we constantly have to keep talking about, and that we constantly have to keep moving forward on," she said. "It is exciting, and hopefully we are just at the beginning."

Know an attorney who should be featured in the next issue of *Mosaic*?
Email us at ucli@utahcli.org.

NEW, MORE INCLUSIVE ARTWORK AT THE SALT LAKE CITY JUSTICE COURT HONORS NEW AMERICANS

by Kristen Olsen, UCLI Co-President

The Salt Lake City Justice Court recently installed twenty-four photographs throughout its courthouse from Nick Sokoloff's series entitled **"The New Americans of Salt Lake: Portraits of Struggle, Spirit, and Inspiration."** These photographs of Utah's immigrants and refugees—paid for with the generous support of Salt Lake City and the Utah Center for Legal Inclusion—are intended to make the five courtrooms and lobby of the busy Salt Lake City Justice Court more welcoming and inclusive.

Traditional courthouse spaces are often designed to symbolize authority and to underscore the importance and legitimacy in the rule of law—incorporating dark wood elements, elevated judicial benches, and portraits of current or past judges. These traditional features can feel imposing and intimidating to the jurors, criminal defendants, crime victims, testifying witnesses, and courtroom observers who may have limited experience with the judicial process.

Pictured: Portraits of the "New Americans of Salt Lake" collection featured in a Salt Lake Justice Court courtroom



Pictured: Portraits of the "New Americans of Salt Lake" collection featured in a Salt Lake Justice Court courtroom

Some attorneys of color who practice in Utah's courthouses have also lamented that the portraits of current and past judges, many of whom look homogenous, can send a message that attorneys from various ethnic and racial backgrounds do not belong at the highest levels of Utah's legal profession. *(Continued on next page)*



See [HERE](#) for more information about the New Americans Project.

See [HERE](#) for more information about the photographer, Nick Sokoloff.

The modern trend, especially in high-volume, lower-level courts such as the Salt Lake City Justice Court, is focused on making these spaces more open, inclusive, and user-friendly. Indeed, the American Bar Association has directed courts to reevaluate the messaging and micro-messaging incorporated into their courthouse design to ensure these spaces are both affirming and equitable.

Each of the photographs on display at the Salt Lake City Justice Court features an individual who recently resettled in the Salt Lake City area. Nick Sokoloff's vision was to explore their journeys and vividly display how each individual has added to the rich fabric of our community.

The Salt Lake City Justice Court worked together with Dr. David Parker, an expert on creating positive and

inclusive cultures and climates, to ensure that the four portraits selected for each courtroom struck an appropriate balance between the need to both promote the rule of law and the desire to create a welcoming and user-friendly environment.

So far, the feedback from the Salt Lake City Justice Court's community partners has been positive. According to Judge Clemens Landau, the most common response has been: **"When is the court going to get more of these photographs to fill the remaining blank walls?"**

Pictured: Photos of individuals in Nick Sokoloff's "The New Americans of Salt Lake: Portraits of Struggle, Spirit, and Inspiration"



Want to support D&I efforts in our community and help facilitate inclusiveness in your work environment?

Become UCLI Certified.

Congratulations to the first 10 legal employers on their early enrollment:

Utah Attorney General's Office

First Legal Employer to Enroll

Ray Quinney & Nebeker

Snell & Wilmer

Lear & Lear PLLC

Holland & Hart LLP

Parr Brown Gee & Loveless

First Utah Law Firm to Enroll

Parsons Behle & Latimer

Stoel Rives LLP

Ballard Spahr LLP

Hillyard, Anderson & Olsen, PC

For more information about the UCLI Certification Program, click [HERE](#) and continue reading below.

UCLI Certification Program

*One of UCLI's objectives is to provide Utah legal employers with the right tools to tackle the challenges related to hiring, retention, advancement and inclusion of diverse attorneys. To that end, UCLI invites legal employers to become **UCLI Certified**.*

Benefits of UCLI Certification

- Increase diversity and inclusion within your workplace and become more innovative and competitive as a result;
- Access the most effective strategies, methods, policies, standards, and practices for advancing D&I in your workplace;
- Improve your ability to recruit and retain top diverse talent and to attract clients who seek diverse counsel;
- Demonstrate commitment to D&I to those within and outside your organization with this objective, credible, and respected state-wide certification.

How to Become UCLI Certified in 2020*

Make a **commitment by January 31, 2020**, to do each of the following in 2020:

- Designate a UCLI Representative from your organization's leadership as the primary UCLI contact;
- Adopt and start implementing a D&I Policy (of your choosing);
- Host a one-hour UCLI CLE to your org. on UCLI's purposes, the importance of D&I, and related issues, and provide incentive for your employees to attend;
- Have at least two members of senior management (at least one of whom is a male) complete at least three hours of D&I related CLEs or training annually;
- Become a UCLI Sponsor or host/volunteer at a UCLI or D&I related event; and
- Complete an annual UCLI survey to help UCLI track progress toward achieving its objectives (confidential reporting permitted).

To enroll or for more information, click **HERE** or contact: Certification Oversight Committee Chair Melanie Grayson (melanie-grayson@pluralsight.com), Organizational Inclusion Committee Chair James Sorenson (jsorenson@rqn.com) or UCLI's Executive Director Aida Neimarlija (aida@neimarlaw.com).

*Criteria may evolve each year to match the community's needs. UCLI will work with legal representatives statewide to continuously develop the program. Any changes to the criteria will be announced in the fall before the enrollment deadline for the following year. The participant must be enrolled in the UCLI Certification Program at the time it displays a UCLI Certification Logo in any media/materials. Additional terms and conditions apply. See www.utahcli.org/certification.

UCLI CO-SPONSORS THE HISPANIC NATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION RECEPTION

by **Jon Olson and Joseph Rivera,**
UCLI's Hinckley Institute Interns

On August 21, 2019, Holland & Hart hosted a UCLI co-sponsored Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA) reception. The reception was attended by prominent role models such as Ross Romero, the first Utah lawyer to ever serve as HNBA's President; Elizabeth Kronk Warner, the new Dean of the University of Utah S.J. Quinney Law School; and retired Supreme Court Justice Christine Durham, whose remarks were passionate and inspirational.

HNBA's mission is to advocate for Hispanic individuals who work within in the legal profession and to focus on issues related to the Hispanic community. From a numbers perspective, the Hispanic community is the most underrepresented racial minority in legal work. To address this reality, the programs of the HNBA provide professional, business, and leadership development to guide others to success. The HNBA also awards scholarships and financial support to Hispanic students to support them in pursuing an education in law.

HNBA has made such a difference in diversifying the legal profession, and UCLI is honored to have been a part of this important celebration!



Pictured above
(top to bottom):

Chris and Yvonne Hogle

**Magistrate Judge Cecilia Romero
and Utah Law School Dean
Elizabeth Kronk Warner**

HNBA Reception
attendees



Pictured (left to right): **Ross Romero, Justice Christine Durham (Ret.), Magistrate Judge Cecilia Romero, Raj Dhaliwal, and Bryan Benard.**

THANK YOU TO OUR JUNETEENTH SPONSORS!

UCLI is proud to have been selected as the beneficiary of the Utah Minority Bar Association's Sixth Annual "Juneteenth" Fundraiser this summer. 312 individuals from over 30 law firms and organizations competed in teams and ultimately raised \$44,444, making this the most successful Juneteenth fundraiser yet! UCLI sends our thanks to our wonderful legal community for its contributions which will fund UCLI's scholarship and other programs for diverse and traditionally underrepresented students.



Winners of the UMBA Traveling Trophies:

TRASK  RITT

BURBIDGE | MITCHELL

Additional Top Teams:

Maschoff Brennan

Dewsnup King Olsen Worel Havas Mortensen

Kirton McConkie

Durham Jones & Pinegar

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Parr Brown Gee & Loveless

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LEGAL EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT: DORSEY & WHITNEY

by Aida Neimarlija, UCLI Executive Director

Diversity and inclusion are buzzwords in the legal industry as firms across the country work to enhance their ability to attract and retain diverse legal teams. While the conversation around these topics has increased, some firms continue to find it difficult to implement strategies to improve firm diversity. Some, however, are already ahead in their effort to move the needle and, as such, deserve a recognition.

We take this opportunity to highlight Dorsey & Whitney, one of the firms in our community that has taken specific actions in support of its commitment to being an inclusive organization that values diverse backgrounds, perspectives and contributions.

This summer, the firm announced a **new Diversity Hours Policy for attorneys**. Under the new policy, Dorsey will allow **50 hours each year of diversity-related work, activities and training to count toward billable hours** requirements. Qualifying activities include attending internal and external diversity educational sessions, presenting on diversity and inclusion topics, serving on diversity and inclusion committees, and other diversity-related activities.

"Dorsey is committed to creating an enduring, more united and more profitable firm by investing and maintaining a culture in which all individuals can thrive and realize their full potential," said Bill Stoeri, Dorsey's Managing Partner. "We are proud to demonstrate this commitment with separate diversity hours to help us achieve this goal."



"Dorsey is committed to creating an enduring, more united and more profitable firm by investing and maintaining a culture in which all individuals can thrive and realize their full potential."

**-- Bill Stoeri, Managing Partner
at Dorsey and Whitney**

After rolling out its Diversity Hours Policy, **the firm also undertook firm-wide implicit bias training** this fall. The training aimed to help all Dorsey attorneys and staff understand what implicit bias is, how it affects people, and how it is identified. It also challenged attendees to question their initial assumptions about others and be aware how commonplace words and actions could be interpreted by others.

Recently, **Dorsey also implemented a new, more generous Paid Parental Leave for lawyers**. The leave is now **15 weeks** (with additional time permitted for lawyers who give birth). Lawyers who take at least 12 continuous weeks of Paid Parental Leave will have their billable hours expectation reduced by 50% during the four weeks before and after that period of leave.

As a result of its efforts, Dorsey has received multiple recognitions for being an employer that is supportive of diversity and inclusion. Some of those recognitions include being named a Best Law Firm for Women by Working Mother magazine, a Best Place to Work for LGBTQ Equality, and receiving Mansfield Rule Certification Plus and the Gold Standard Certification from the Women in Law Empowerment Forum.

The firm says its efforts stem from its belief that an inclusive and diverse work environment makes Dorsey a better place to work, and that its clients benefit from increased efficiency, improved teamwork, and higher morale of the firm's diverse client teams. *(Continued on next page)*

In addition to firm-wide internal efforts, Dorsey has been a supporter of local diversity efforts, including the Utah Center for Legal Inclusion (UCLI) since its founding. Several Dorsey attorneys have served on UCLI board and committees, and Dorsey has hosted numerous UCLI events. The firm is also active in supporting UCLI's affinity groups, including the Women Lawyers of Utah, LGBT & Allied Lawyers of Utah, and the Utah Minority Bar Association, as well as other diversity groups outside of the legal industry such as the Women Tech Council

and the Women's Energy Network.

"It's important to me to work at a firm that aligns with my personal beliefs that everyone should be given an opportunity to succeed and to contribute to the legal profession," said Kristen Olsen, an associate in Dorsey's Salt Lake City office. "I'm pleased that Dorsey has supported my efforts to promote equity and inclusion initiatives, such as UCLI, in the broader legal profession."

UCLI extends special thanks to additional organizations and individuals that made significant monetary contributions to UCLI of \$2,000 or more to help kick off its operations:

The Florence J. Gillmor Foundation
The Utah State Bar
The Utah Bar Foundation

Sam Adams, Esq.

Jane Marquardt, Esq.

Rodney Snow, Esq.

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TALK OF THE TOWN

Elizabeth Kronk Warner became the first female and first Native American Dean of the University of Utah S.J. Quinney Law School.

BYU J. Reuben Clark Law School welcomed its first Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Barbara Melendez.

Dorsey & Whitney increased its paid parental leave to 15 weeks (with additional time permitted for lawyers who give birth).

Utah's Federal Court welcomed new Magistrate Judge Cecilia Romero, formerly a partner at Holland & Hart.

This fall, UCLI's Executive Director provided training on D&I issues to the Utah State Court judges, the Utah Attorney General's Office, and a department within Salt Lake County.

Eli McCann became the first open LGBTQIA+ shareholder at Kirton McConkie.

Tiffany Shimada, an IP lawyer, became the first African-American female income partner in a national or international firm in Utah.

Dorsey & Whitney's new Diversity Hours Policy allows 50 hours annually of diversity-related work, activities, and training to count toward billable hours requirements.

This fall, Stoel Rives, one of the 5 national investors in the Move The Needle (MTN) Fund, kicked off the MTN "On Track" program to promote more diverse attorneys into the equity partnership tier.

Diverse captains of the UCLI-supported state championship West High Mock Trial Team, Tejitha Agarwal and Gideon Gomm, were admitted to Yale University & the Parsons School of Design, respectively.

Parr Brown and the Utah Attorney General's Office became the first firm & organization, respectively, to become UCLI Certified.

This summer, UCLI hired its first permanent Executive Director, Aida Neimarlija, Esq., an Assistant Director, Ling Ritter, and four interns, Jon Olsen, Joseph Rivera, Liliane Kwizera, & Paola Robles.

We invite you to share your (or any) exciting local diversity & inclusion news by emailing us at ucli@utahcli.org.

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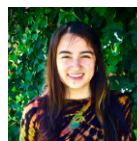


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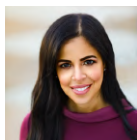


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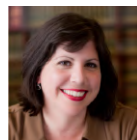
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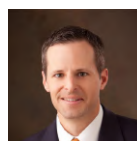
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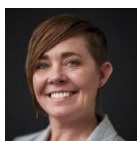
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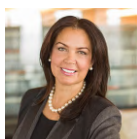
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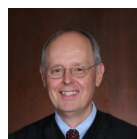
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