

News & Notes

Northwestern University School of Law

Fall 2004

Collaborations in Support of Education and the Public Interest

inside

Report from the Clinic Director, Significant Cases, Featured Programs, and Alumni News

Cassel Hails Ruling in Favor of Detainees' Rights

A chance meeting in a hallway at the Law School two years ago between Joe Margulies (JD '88) who represented four of the "suspected terrorists" detained at Guantánamo Bay, and Doug Cassel, director of the Center for International Human Rights (CIHR), made the Bluhm Legal Clinic a major player in what Cassel calls "the most significant decisions on liberty and the rule of law in at least a half century."

In two rulings on June 28, the Supreme Court rejected the Bush administration's claims that anyone the president labels an enemy combatant—including about 600 foreigners held at the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba—could be imprisoned indefinitely without due process of law.

"If the Supreme Court had allowed the Bush administration's position to stand, it would have set a horrible example to the rest of the world," says Cassel, who became a consultant to lawyers representing the detainees as a result of the meeting with Margulies. Margulies, who has since joined the University of Chicago's



Doug Cassel (photo by Andrew Campbell)

"We decided that our posture couldn't be 'the terrorists versus the U.S. president,' but had to be 'the rule of law versus the U.S. president.'"

MacArthur Justice Center, solicited Cassel to help as an expert on international law and a veteran of human rights cases.

The first case involved Yasser Hamdi, an American citizen imprisoned by the U.S. military for nearly three years because the government accused him of being a Taliban fighter. The justices said Hamdi is entitled to a "meaningful" judicial review, including notification of the factual basis of the allegations against him and an opportunity to rebut them and to present his own evidence before a neutral decision maker.

The second case applied to the non-U.S. citizens being held without charge at Guantánamo Bay. The court rejected the government's argument that American courts could not hear their cases because Guantánamo is not sovereign U.S. territory. Noting that the government concedes that courts could hear claims by American citizens held at Guantánamo, the justices said a prisoner's right to a court hearing does not depend on citizenship.

The day after the opinions were handed down, Cassel proclaimed their significance in a commentary in the *Chicago Tribune*. The justices' action, he wrote, "reveals a court determined to restore a sense of constitutional balance to the 'war' against terrorism.... That is a triumph for liberty. Thanks to the Supreme Court, America has reclaimed the aspiration to the rule of law that sets us apart from our terrorist enemies."

One of Cassel's primary roles was to use his many contacts to enlist lawyers, judges, legislators, and diplomats to write amicus curiae briefs to persuade the Supreme Court to take the case of the uncharged terrorist suspects. He enlisted former federal appellate

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Message from the Director

Clinical Education and Links to the Practicing Bar

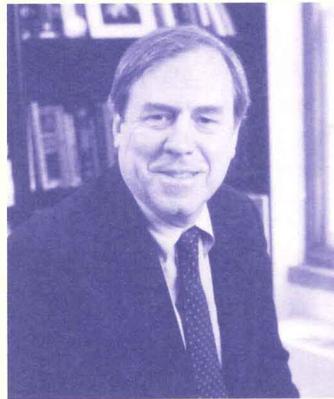
By Thomas F. Geraghty, Professor of Law, Associate Dean of Clinical Education, and Director, Bluhm Legal Clinic

Partnerships with members of the practicing bar—sole practitioners, public interest organizations, and law firms—strengthen and energize Bluhm Legal Clinic programs and projects. Our students, faculty, and staff have worked with legislators, public interest professionals, and advocates across the country and around the world to file amicus briefs in U.S. Supreme Court cases, provide defense for juveniles, and correct wrongful convictions.

Following 9/11 and the war in Afghanistan, faculty in the Center for International Human Rights coordinated the submission of an amicus brief to the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of Guantánamo detainees to ensure that prisoners there and elsewhere receive due process of law. Clinical faculty and students also took the lead in preparing and filing amicus briefs in opposition to the juvenile death penalty in the case of *Roper v. Simmons*, now pending before the U.S. Supreme Court. One brief was signed by 17 Nobel Laureates and the other by more than 50 national children's rights groups, including the Child Welfare League of America, the Children's Defense Fund, and the National Center of Counsel for Children.

In addition, through a partnership with the national firm Piper Rudnick, the Bluhm Legal Clinic will bring resources and best practices to the representation of children while modeling state-of-the-art representation for all who practice in the Juvenile Court of Cook County. Carolyn Frazier (JD '02) has joined the clinic as the first Piper Rudnick Fellow. She is supervising the firm's and clinic's collaborative efforts to provide excellent representation for children in delinquency cases as well as to support new initiatives to improve services for children in conflict with the law. Northwestern Law students are working with young Piper Rudnick lawyers under the supervision of teams of senior firm attorneys and Bluhm Legal Clinic faculty.

The Piper Rudnick–Bluhm partnership is only the most recent in a long tradition of collaborations with law firms. Clinic faculty, staff, and students often seek the assistance of Chicago-area legal professionals on individual cases and vice versa. For example, Jenner & Block supported our efforts in obtaining habeas relief from the Seventh Circuit for a 12-year-old convicted of murder based on an unreliable confession in the case *A.M. v. Butler*. Other law firms, including Lord Bissell & Brook; McDermott Will & Emery; Katten Muchin Zavis & Rosenman; and Vedder Price Kaufman & Kammholz among others, have collaborated with clinical faculty and students to



Tom Geraghty (photo by Jim Ziv)

provide children with excellent representation in juvenile court. We also recently teamed up with Baker & McKenzie in the wrongful conviction case of *People v. Ronald Kitchen*. Additionally, Schiff Hardin & Waite signed on as co-counsel in the wrongful conviction case *People v. Julie Rae Harper*.

We continue to work with various organizations to spread the word about clinical education in Africa. During the 2004–05 academic year, the Bluhm Legal Clinic will host law faculty interested in learning about Northwestern's clinical program from Ghana, Namibia, Botswana, and Ethiopia. This fall clinic students, faculty, and staff will participate in a conference on legal aid in Africa sponsored by Penal Reform International. The conference will take place in Malawi in November 2004.

Not only have these collaborations strengthened ties between the Law School and law firms but they've also provided a great service to the courts. By working with members of the practicing bar we have created an environment at the Bluhm Legal Clinic of importance, competence, and excitement for our students and faculty. It will be a privilege for us to continue on this path. We would be delighted to hear your suggestions about how we might take even better advantage of this strategy to invigorate our educational program and to provide valuable educational opportunities for our students.

Cassel Hails Ruling in Favor of Detainees' Rights

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court chief judge Abner Mikva, former senator Paul Simon, former ABA president Jerome Shestack, and partners at Jenner & Block; Schiff, Hardin & Waite; Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw; and Jones Day, among others, to write briefs.

"It was a major effort over a sustained period to get amicus briefs," Cassel says.

Their work paid off.

Late last year and early this year, the Supreme Court decided to take both the Guantánamo and the Hamdi cases, as well as a similar case involving U.S. citizen Jose Padilla. Following the court's decision, the various lawyers representing imprisoned suspected terrorists in the three cases started to strategize together. Some 15 to 20 of them met about a half-dozen times in New York or Washington, and they supplemented the meetings with monthly conference calls.

"We decided that our posture couldn't be 'the terrorists versus the U.S. president,'" Cassel says, "but had to be 'the rule of law versus the U.S. president.'" Cassel advised his colleagues — many of whom specialize in domestic law — about international human rights law and human rights conventions. He had research support from law students and help from the CIHR's assistant director Bridget Arimond in drafting a lengthy memo about international issues.

The June 28 decisions did not gain release for the detainees but gave them the opportunity to have their cases heard by a judge or other neutral arbiter. Cassel says he will continue to be available to the detainees' lawyers as a consultant but is also moving into a new phase. A small number of Guantánamo prisoners have now been charged, and the CIHR is advising the military defense counsel about international law rules.

As more law firms have become involved since the Supreme Court gave the detainees permission to file cases, Cassel says he will miss the teamwork of the smaller group. "One of the things I enjoyed was that even though these were high-powered people representing different clients, there was a lot of common mission and teamwork," he says. "It was a marvelous legal team. It'll be hard to get that same sense of teamwork with 75 people involved."



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Center for International Human Rights

CIHR conducts academic and practical work in support of internationally recognized human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.

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Center on Wrongful Convictions

CWC is dedicated to identifying and rectifying wrongful convictions and other serious miscarriages of justice. The center has three components: representation, research, and public education.

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Children and Family Justice Center

CFJC is a holistic children's law center, a clinical teaching program, and a research and policy center engaged with a major urban court, the Juvenile Court of Cook County.

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Fred Bartlit Center for Trial Strategy

The Bartlit Center teaches innovative and technologically advanced trial strategy.

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Small Business Opportunity Center

SBOC is a student-based clinical program providing affordable legal assistance to entrepreneurs, start-ups, and not-for-profit organizations.

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To make a gift to the clinic or one of its centers, please visit www.law.northwestern.edu/giving.

Students Work 24/7 to Save Death Row Inmate

What do you do if a defense lawyer asks you for help six weeks before her client is scheduled for execution and the courts have denied her every petition?

If you are a member of Northwestern Law's Center on Wrongful Convictions (CWC), you sign on.

"It's unusual for us to get involved at such a late hour," says Jane Raley, senior staff attorney at the center, "but how can you turn down someone who says she has only one month before the execution? Juliet was desperate."

Juliet Yackel is the Chicago lawyer who had labored alone for Darnell Williams during many of the years Williams spent on death row for the 1986 murders of John and Henrietta Rease in Gary, Indiana. Williams was scheduled to be executed by lethal injection on July 9. At the end of May, Yackel sought the center's help, and Raley agreed to write the clemency petition and help Yackel prepare for the June 28 clemency hearing before the Indiana Parole Board.

"Saving Darnell's life became an all-consuming affair," says second-year student Marie Fahnert, one of eight law students and two student interns who worked through the month of June helping center staff lawyers with the case.

"Knowing someone's life is on the line is a terrifying, stressful ordeal," Fahnert says. "This experience was the ultimate test of whether I want to work as a death penalty lawyer. It's not the job that will make me the happiest, but if you can do it, how can you not try to save someone?"

On July 2 Indiana governor Joe Kernan granted Williams clemency from execution and commuted his sentence to life without parole. It was the first time in nearly half a century that an Indiana governor granted clemency.

The argument the CWC and Yackel made was twofold. First, what happened at the murder scene will never be known. Williams was present during the crime, but new evidence calls into question whether he was the triggerman. Second, since Williams's codefendant, who instigated the robbery attempt at the Rease home, was judged ineligible for capital punishment due to mental retardation, Williams, who also has some degree of retardation, should also not be eligible.

Under Raley's direction, the students turned over a few new stones in the investigation. They tracked down and gathered statements from six jurors who had recommended the death penalty for Williams and later changed their minds after the trial. The students researched the circumstances for granting clemency in cases around the country dating back to 1857. They talked to death penalty experts to formulate arguments.

The students discovered that criminal defense lawyers have to be social workers, too—or what Monica Hunt (JD '06) calls "humane

and compassionate advocates." Not only did they visit Williams weekly in prison in Michigan City, they also visited his relatives and even the Reases' relatives. They were nervous about approaching Carletha Davis, a niece of Henrietta Rease who had spoken against clemency at an earlier hearing. But they wanted to give the Reases' relatives the news about the new clemency petition, and they knew that Governor Kernan would ask how the family felt about clemency.

"Having to confront the Rease family was a humbling experience," Hunt says. "There was not a case or any amount of wit that could have prepared me for that moment. At that point, I had to be human, to acknowledge and share their hurt and respect their anger. I had to let them know we were not the enemy. I came away from that experience knowing that confronting pain and administering healing is also a part of advocacy."

A few days later Davis had another visit arranged through the CWC. Sage Smith, a rehabilitated ex-offender who works at the clinic, contacted the church in Gary where Rev. R. T. Mitchell, who had presided at the Reases' funeral, was still ministering. Smith and Mitchell met and then brought Williams's mother and Carletha Davis together. Davis subsequently stayed away from the clemency hearing. Mitchell attended, bringing petitions from his congregation that Williams be spared the death penalty.

CWC senior staff attorney Jeffrey Urdangen joined Yackel in making the presentation to the Indiana Parole Board. When the board voted 5-0 to recommend clemency, Williams's advocates were, to say the least, relieved and gratified.

"With its unanimous recommendation, the parole board gave the governor a basis for granting clemency," Raley says. Three days later, exactly a week before the scheduled execution date, Kernan granted clemency.

For the students who plan to make criminal defense their life's work, the Williams case was as inspiring as it was atypical for their short-term involvement. Michael Tarleton (JD '06) says of the experience: "Having the opportunity to contribute in some small way to saving Darnell's life has convinced me that I should spend the rest of my life trying to do exactly what I have been lucky enough to do this summer."

Center on Wrongful Convictions Represents Julie Rae Harper on Retrial

In May 2004 the Center on Wrongful Convictions petitioned the Lawrence County Circuit Court to set aside the conviction of Julie Rae Harper for the murder of her 10-year-old son — a crime that a serial killer on death row in Texas has claimed he committed. The case has been remanded for a new trial in Lawrenceville, Illinois, and clinic faculty and students are now preparing her defense.

Harper, a doctoral candidate at Indiana University, has consistently maintained her innocence. She reported that on the night of

October 13, 1997, an intruder broke into her home at 4:30 a.m., stabbed her son Joel Kirkpatrick to death in his bed, and then attacked her. Although Harper suffered injuries consistent with her account, the prosecution argued at her first trial in 2002 that it was not credible that an intruder would enter a home, kill a boy for no apparent reason, then fail to kill the mother. The jury found Harper guilty, and she was sentenced to 65 years in prison.

At a preliminary hearing in September 2004, Northwestern Law attorneys pointed out that, contrary to what the jury may have been led to believe, there was at the time of the crime a serial killer roaming the country and committing similar crimes: Tommy Lynn Sells, who has now confessed numerous times to murdering Joel Kirkpatrick. His confession is corroborated by statements of disinterested witnesses who reported seeing a stranger matching Sells' description in the Lawrenceville area before and after Joel's murder. Harper's legal team, which also includes several Northwestern Law alumni working pro bono, will offer evidence about Sells at the retrial in January 2005 and will seek to rebut the prosecution's theory that Harper "staged" the crime scene.

Murder Charges Dismissed; Steidl Walks Away from Prison after 17 Years

Years of work by numerous lawyers, including compelling arguments by the Center on Wrongful Convictions, led to the exoneration of Gordon (Randy) Steidl, who after more than 17 years behind bars—12 of which he spent on death row—was released from prison in May 2004. Steidl had been convicted of the 1986 slaying of newlyweds Karen and Dyke Rhoads in Paris, Illinois.

In March, an exhaustive new investigation of the Steidl case, including DNA testing on evidence, resulted in Illinois attorney general Lisa Madigan's decision to not appeal U.S. District Court Judge Michael McCuskey's order to grant a new trial. McCuskey said in his opinion that "acquittal was reasonably probable if the jury had heard all of the evidence."

The decision by Madigan—who initially filed notice that she would appeal McCuskey's decision—paved the way for the ruling in Edgar County Circuit Court, where the case then returned. The state's attorney's appellate prosecutor, previously appointed to prosecute the case, presented the motion and moved to dismiss the case.

Steidl, who received a life sentence, and Herbert Whitlock were convicted of murdering the Rhoads. The two men continued to maintain their innocence, and the main witness against them recanted repeatedly.

Steidl is the 18th man sentenced to death in Illinois to be exonerated and released. Between enactment of the death penalty law in 1978 and former governor George H. Ryan's blanket commutation

of all death sentences in 2003, 288 men and women have been sentenced to death in Illinois. With Steidl's exoneration, the wrongful conviction rate for death row prisoners is more than 6 percent.

Steidl's CWC lawyers include legal director Lawrence Marshall and staff attorneys Karen Daniel and Jane Raley. Other Steidl lawyers include Michael Metnick of Springfield, Illinois, and Kathryn Saltmarsh of the Illinois Appellate Defender's Office. Professor David Protes, of Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism, also played a major investigative role in the case.

Clinic Joins International Community in Call to End Juvenile Executions in the United States

In July, several Bluhm Legal Clinic attorneys and students helped draft and file two amicus briefs in the U.S. Supreme Court case *Roper v. Simmons*, asserting that the juvenile death penalty is unconstitutional under the Eighth Amendment. The Supreme Court will hear oral arguments regarding the constitutionality of the juvenile death penalty in October and is expected to issue a ruling by early next spring.

On behalf of more than 50 child advocacy organizations, Steve Drizin co-wrote and filed a brief that focused on the national consensus against executing juvenile offenders. Lauren Adams and her students assisted volunteer attorneys in drafting a brief that focused on the prohibition of the juvenile death penalty as a widely recognized rule of international law. They recruited signatories and coordinated the filing of the brief, which was signed by 17 Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, including former president Jimmy Carter.

In addition to preparing the briefs, attorneys in the Bluhm Legal Clinic's Children and Family Justice Center (CFJC), including Drizin, Adams, and Bernardine Dohrn have worked for many years with a coalition of national groups to raise the minimum age for the death penalty. Their work centers on building and strengthening local coalitions in target states that support legislation that would raise the minimum age for the death penalty to 18. CFJC attorneys also have joined attorneys and advocates from across the nation in seeking clemency for juvenile offenders facing imminent execution.

Featured Programs

Carolyn Frazier, Piper Rudnick Fellow

The Bluhm Legal Clinic has launched a joint venture this year with Piper Rudnick LLP to create a new fellowship position at the Law School. The program stems from a recent Piper Rudnick pro bono initiative to address the needs of children in the Illinois juvenile justice system. The Piper Rudnick Fellow, Carolyn Frazier (JD '02), will coordinate the firm's and clinic's efforts to provide children in the Cook County Juvenile Court with increased access to legal assistance through direct representation and policy work.

As part of the partnership, clinic faculty and students will work with Piper Rudnick attorneys on individual cases, the goal being to improve the quality of legal and social services provided to the children and families who appear in juvenile court.

"I think partnering with such a large firm that has so many resources allows us to have a greater impact with the work we're doing," Frazier says. "Obviously with students involved, it's really valuable, because students will be working alongside practicing attorneys. It's really good experience for them and something that you don't always get in law school."

Clinic director Tom Geraghty says Frazier was an obvious candidate for the fellowship position "because of her talent, energy, and commitment to public interest work and to clinical teaching."

Frazier became acquainted with the clinic as a law student, working closely with Geraghty and other students to represent juveniles in delinquency cases. She also worked with Geraghty on the case of Ronald Kitchen, one of the Death Row Ten inmates allegedly beaten by Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge and his officers. Following graduation, Frazier worked as an associate at Baker & McKenzie and continued helping first as a volunteer attorney and later as co-counsel on Kitchen's case.

"[Carolyn] worked as an unofficial member of my clinic team last semester and took the lead in writing one of the best post-conviction petitions ever filed," Geraghty says. "She worked extremely well with our students. They loved working with her."

Frazier's role as the resident fellow, whose position is being sponsored by Piper Rudnick, is to provide support and resources to the attorneys and act as a liaison between the firm and the clinic.

The fellowship originated as one of several project proposals Geraghty suggested to Stan Adelman, a partner at Piper Rudnick and longtime friend of Geraghty's, who is helping to spearhead the program.

"Everyone was excited about the project, but we all recognized that we're a large commercial firm and we didn't have the expertise in juvenile justice," Adelman says. "People asked who would be good to team up with, and naturally I thought of Tom and his clinic. We're willing to provide the man power and the money, but we don't have the kind of expertise that Tom and his staff have in this area."

Piper Rudnick's goal is to have at least 100 attorneys involved in the project during its first year. Geraghty hopes that the success of the

Piper Rudnick Fellowship will persuade additional law firms to sponsor fellows as part of their pro bono programs in other legal areas, such as death penalty reform, wrongful convictions, and international human rights.

"We believe that we can offer law firms concrete ideas, perspectives, contacts, and on-going support to develop pro-bono programs which will benefit our law students, young law firm lawyers, and the community," Geraghty says. "I am very grateful for Piper Rudnick's support of this significant Bluhm Legal Clinic initiative."

SBOC Trains Prospective Family Business Owners

Last year, as part of its aim to help underserved Chicago neighborhoods, the Small Business Opportunity Center (SBOC) gave two training sessions in the North Lawndale neighborhood for residents hoping to start family businesses.

About 25 prospective small business owners attended each of the two workshops in basic legal concepts conducted by SBOC director Tom Morsch and community outreach chair Tamika Cushenberry (JD '04). Sinai Medical Center, which serves a primarily African-American and Hispanic community on the Near West Side, offered the sessions through its Family Business Program.

The first session taught the participants about partnerships, corporations, and not-for-profits. The second covered licenses, permits, and contracts.

The program required that family members come in groups of two or more and agree to work together to start a business. Morsch said that mothers and daughters, brothers, sisters, and other family groups came with dreams of starting businesses like a dress shop, a beauty shop, a floral business, a restaurant, and a computer consulting firm. Unfortunately, none of the groups has been able to get a business off the ground yet, perhaps because a promised source of start-up funding has not materialized, he said.

Morsch thinks the SBOC efforts still have had results.

SBOC's participation in the program "did establish us as an important resource in that community, which we have identified as a special SBOC project," he said. "We have since received challenging assignments from there." These have included:

- Partnering with the Lawndale Business and Local Development Corp., the leading community development organization in North Lawndale, which is developing a small business incubator and job training program at an abandoned U.S. Army armory.
- Working with the Young Men's Educational Network on economic development in North Lawndale. The organization's most recent proposal was to acquire a laundry and car wash to provide employment opportunities for neighborhood youth.

Beth Colgan

Beth Colgan (JD '00) has been selected by the Washington State Bar Association's Young Lawyer's Division to be the recipient of the 2004 Thomas Neville Pro Bono Award. Named to honor Thomas Neville, a Western Washington attorney murdered in his office by the estranged husband of a pro bono family client, the award recognizes the Washington young lawyer who has generously committed his or her time and efforts to provide legal services for the public good. Recipients must also have shown outstanding commitment to the provision of pro bono legal services to those in need.

Patricia J. Arthur of Columbia Legal Services, who nominated Colgan for the award, described her this way: "She has provided her clients excellence in all forums of advocacy, critical strategic thinking, rock solid judgment, and respect and compassion in manner and style. She is the rare lawyer who never assumes the limelight and works tirelessly to help clients who have been left behind and have no place to turn for hope."

Colgan is an associate in the litigation department of Perkins Coie and has logged over 1200 hours of pro bono work, primarily representing juvenile defendants in post-conviction proceedings, since arriving at the firm.

Julie Nice

In 1991, Julie Nice (JD '86) left Chicago and moved to Denver to teach constitutional law and poverty law at the University of Denver. "I thought I would stay only for a few years," she says. Thirteen years later, she is still there and is now serving as the Charles W. Delaney Jr. Professor of Law. Nice has won seven teaching awards from the University of Denver.

Prior to joining the Denver law faculty, she worked for the Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago, representing lower income people in federal, state, and administrative litigation, and taught at Northwestern Law as a clinical fellow from 1989 to 1991.

"No one who knew me as a student would have accused me of being a fan of legal education," Nice says. She credits Tom Geraghty for persuading her to join the ranks of legal educators. "I am devoted to linking the supply of law students eager for meaningful work with the many unmet demands for social justice advocacy," she says.

Nice is now focusing her efforts on developing more direct and active public interest involvement among faculty, staff, and students by organizing Denver's new Social Justice Action Group (S-JAG).

The student-run organization provides legal assistance to law firms, non-profits, and grassroots associations committed to social justice. In the last eight months, S-JAG members investigated extensive and unlawful delays in processing Medicaid applications in preparation for a class action lawsuit; prepared an amicus brief in a rape case involving college football players; helped organize the "You Don't Need A

Home to Vote" campaign in Colorado; provided legal research for an ethnic community challenging their disproportionate share of harmful environmental impacts; and prepared a plan for providing foreign language interpreters in rural courts, among other projects.

"S-JAG is structured much like a law review in an effort to provide high-quality, peer-reviewed public interest law work," Nice explains.

Nice also has been speaking on the unconstitutionality of same-sex marriage bans before a variety of audiences ranging from the American Academy of Matrimonial Law to audiences at the Pan African Film Festival. In addition, she is the lead author of *Poverty Law: Theory and Practice* (West 1997), and she expects to publish the revised second edition of the textbook this fall. She also has published several articles exploring patterns of analysis in cases relating to discrimination based on class, sexual orientation, immigration, gender, and race.

Randi Ilyse Roth

Randi Ilyse Roth (JD '84) has spent the past few years working as the court-appointed independent monitor for the class action civil rights case *Pigford v. Veneman*, in which 22,000 African-American farmers sued the U.S. Department of Agriculture alleging race discrimination.

The case was settled with an out-of-court consent decree in 1999, and the presiding judge appointed Roth to monitor the decree's implementation. The deadline for farmers to take advantage of relief has been extended to April 14, 2005. As monitor, Roth reviews decisions, solves problems, and issues reports. Claimants denied relief can petition Roth for a review of their cases, and she acts as an appellate decision maker in the claims process. Her other tasks include assistance unrelated to the claim decision, including priority consideration for certain loans, land acquisitions, and technical support and help in receiving approved claims on time. She also issues reports about how the implementation of the decree is proceeding.

Roth describes herself as having been a clinic junkie while in law school, spending as much time as possible handling clinic cases and working in the trial advocacy program. After graduation she worked for the Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago as a staff attorney in Englewood and then at the Robert Taylor Homes. In 1986 Roth left Chicago to join the start-up staff at Farmers' Legal Action Group, a non-profit law center in St. Paul, Minnesota, that provides legal services to help family farmers stay in business. Her clients lived throughout the Midwest and Southeast, and many were African American. Roth worked as a staff attorney and then as executive director at FLAG until the fall of 2003, when she left to start a new professional corporation, Complex Settlements, P.C.

Children and Family Justice Center Honors Three Chicago Firms and a Federal Judge

In April the Children and Family Justice Center (CFJC) honored three Chicago law firms and a federal judge for their contributions to juvenile justice and education as part of the center's Children's Law Pro Bono Project.

Judge William J. Hibbler, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, was honored for initiating the Children's Law Pro Bono Project in the Cook County juvenile court and for his continued support of children's legal rights. Judge Hibbler was previously the presiding judge of the Juvenile Justice Division of the Juvenile Court of Cook County. While he presided, Hibbler was a strong advocate for the pro bono program and introduced the project to other judges and court personnel.

The firms Baker & McKenzie, Lord Bissell & Brook, and McDermott Will & Emery also received honors for the extensive voluntary legal work their attorneys have performed in support of juvenile justice and education. The firms' lawyers, several of whom are Northwestern Law graduates, are recruited, trained, and supervised by the CFJC to represent children charged with misdemeanors or felonies and to help children being expelled from Chicago Public Schools.

Since the Children's Law Pro Bono Project was founded in 1996, more than 350 attorneys from more than 50 prominent Chicago firms have participated in the program. Many of these lawyers become creative advocates for children in crisis, and their efforts have been instrumental in promoting zealous legal practice in the Juvenile Court of Cook County.



Judge Hibbler (photo by Mary Hanlon)

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