



## Kursten Phelps Earns 2010 Raymond Spring Award



*Kursten Phelps*

Kursten Phelps was selected to receive the Raymond Spring Award for 2010. The award is given annually to the Washburn Law Clinic intern who has demonstrated the highest commitment to providing legal services to clients in need.

Kursten worked under the supervision of Associate Professor Lynette Petty representing clients in domestic and immigration matters and serving as guardian ad litem in the child in need of care court. If you ask Kursten what her primary interests were in pursuing a law degree, she would say to help people who have experienced domestic violence and to help undocumented aliens obtain legal immigration status. She found the perfect job which combines these two goals. Last fall after passing the bar exam, she became the immigration and outreach project attorney for the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence.

Kursten's work in the Law Clinic, as well as her previous experiences law clerking for Kansas Legal Services and in a private immigration

office, prepared her well. In the Law Clinic, Kursten represented an undocumented teenage boy in foster care who was about to age out of the system with no way to legally stay or work in the United States. He is now a lawful permanent resident as a result of Kursten's advocacy. She also represented a woman from Mexico who was the victim of severe abuse by her undocumented husband. Kursten helped the woman apply for a U-Visa, an immigration status available to people who cooperate with law enforcement. Also, Kursten helped a woman who is the victim of domestic abuse by her U.S. citizen husband by filing a VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) self-petition which may ultimately allow her to become a lawful permanent resident.

Kursten's work in the Law Clinic was complex and demanding. She was diligent in her representation and dedicated to helping her clients meet their goals. It takes a special person to do the kind of work Kursten pursues: a person who inspires trust, who is willing to research difficult legislation and regulations, and who looks for solutions to complicated issues. Kursten Phelps is that kind of person and will be a credit to the profession.

## Stemple and Vaughn Earn Ungerman Award



*Samara Stemple*

Samara Stemple and Charion Vaughn were the 2010 summer/fall co-recipients of the Irvine E. Ungerman Award for Excellence in Clinical Practice. This award was established to honor one of our outstanding alums, Irvine E. Ungerman, who practiced law in Tulsa, Oklahoma until he died

in 1980. The award is given twice yearly to a student who has distinguished him/herself by providing highly competent representation to clients in a manner exemplifying the ideals of our profession and spirit of public service. The award includes a cash prize.



*Charion Vaughn*

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## Stemple and Vaughn Earn Ungerman Award

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Samara worked under the supervision of Associate Professor Lynette Petty and represented clients in domestic matters, including divorces, paternitys, and an adoption. In addition, she served as guardian ad litem for a teenage girl in foster care. Samara maintained this diverse and complicated caseload with diligence and professionalism.

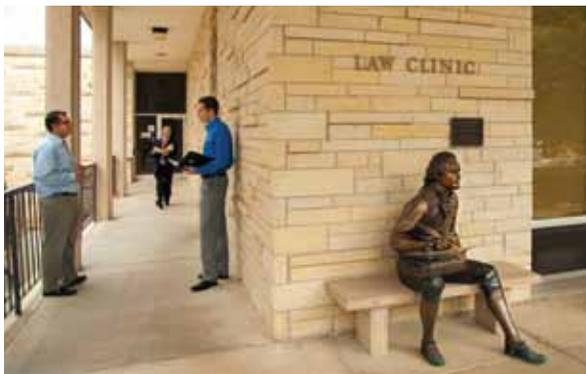
Samara's adoption case was particularly challenging. It involved representation of a stepfather who wanted to adopt his two Native American stepdaughters. Navigating the Indian Child Welfare Act can be very difficult. It is imperative the statute be followed precisely to protect and respect all of the interests involved. Samara was always well-prepared and researched the issues to make sure notice and the other provisions of the statute were followed. She also effectively explained the law to her client and his wife, making sure they understood the intricacies of the Act. In addition, Samara was required to file the case in a county outside the general catchment area of the Law Clinic. She worked with the county clerk's office, navigated the local rules, and presented her case at hearing before a judge who was new to the Clinic. In the end, the Court wanted to know if the Law Clinic could regularly provide services to people who could not otherwise afford an attorney in his county. Samara's professionalism and skill in the

courtroom certainly advanced the reputation of our law school.

Charion enrolled in the Law Clinic during the 2010 summer semester, intending to focus primarily on criminal law cases. However, the urgent needs of a civil litigation case had Charion writing a response to a discovery motion during her first days in the Clinic. She diligently researched the nuanced point of law controlling the question presented by the opponent's motion. Charion's opposition to the motion, which had to be filed in a compressed timeframe, was very well-written and persuasive.

Charion soon had the opportunity to focus her attention on a demanding criminal law matter in which the Clinic's client was charged with battery on a law enforcement officer, disobeying a lawful order, and other related charges. This was a factually challenging case requiring targeted discovery requests, on-the-scene fact investigation, and development of a compelling trial strategy. Charion tackled these tasks, working toward a plan that gave her client a voice in the process. When the trial came around, Charion implemented her trial plan, conducting a highly skilled cross-examination of the arresting officer and a focused direct examination of her client. Charion's closing argument to the court integrated the facts brought out at trial with the law governing the charges. When the trial ended Charion had won an acquittal on the top charge of battery on a law enforcement officer – an outcome seasoned criminal law trial attorneys will tell you is no small feat.

Throughout the summer semester, Charion worked diligently and enthusiastically on her clients' behalf and in the public good. Under the supervision of Professors John Francis and Curtis Vaughn, she honed her lawyering skills through hard work in and out of the courtroom.



## Clinic Experience Applicable to all Facets of Law Practice

New job seekers know the vicious cycle: “You can’t get a job without experience, and you can’t



*Margann Bennett*

get experience without a job.” In today’s highly competitive and evolving job market, the more practical experience you can highlight on your resume the better chance you have at getting noticed by employers.

The legal profession is no different, and third-year Washburn Law students can gain important practical skills by enrolling in Washburn Law Clinic.

“Washburn Law Clinic students already have many of the skills employers are looking for – appearing in court, interviewing clients, and taking depositions,” says Margann Bennett, Director of Professional Development and Pro Bono at Washburn Law.

“Working in Clinic moves you along the learning curve quicker and gives you a head start.”

According to Bennett, the current economic reality faced by employers has forced many to rethink their hiring strategies. New employees are expensive to train so businesses have curtailed their training expenditures and are looking for applicants with proven, practical skills.

“In economic downturns, employers, especially

in the private sector, look for experience since most likely they have cut back on resources and staff to help train new lawyers,” she says. “Clients are not willing to pay to train new lawyers.”

Whether students are looking to ultimately work in transactional law or litigation, practical skills acquired through participating in Clinic can be applied to all areas of law practice.

“Working with clients directly will help you to be a better transactional lawyer. Any setting where clients depend on you will,” Bennett says. She emphasizes that Clinic teaches law students the nuts and bolts of client interaction; how to work effectively with opposing counsel, supervising attorneys, and professional staff; the realities of working in a professional environment; and how to bill time.

The Clinic experience also provides students with professional recommendations from those who have observed the students’ work in the Clinic setting. These references are invaluable

and applicable regardless of the student’s chosen career path.

“Sometime students think Clinic skills are not relevant to what they want to do, but that’s simply not true. At the very least, the experience gives the Clinic interns confidence that they can do the work.”

That confidence combined with real-world experience can provide an advantage to students when applying for jobs says Bennett. “We’ve had employers specifically request students from Clinic knowing they will have valuable experience.”

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# Clinic Interns *Spring 2011*

## Justice Moritz Presides Over Swearing-In Ceremony



Spring 2011 interns were sworn in by Kansas' newest Supreme Court Justice Nancy L. Moritz on Jan. 19. Justice Moritz praised the interns for their willingness to help the community and to enroll in a course she was hesitant to enroll in herself while in law school. She also encouraged the interns to make pro bono work part of their law practice in the future.

Interns are sworn into student practice by taking an oath to support the constitution of the United States and the constitution of the State of Kansas, to faithfully perform the duties of a legal intern and certify they have read and will abide by the rules relating to the discipline of Kansas attorneys and Supreme Court Rule 719. The tradition of the swearing-in ceremony started in 2005 and continues to be one of utmost importance in an intern's law school career.



*Marie Skogen, Laura Coughlin, Michelle Le,  
Jonathan Zadina*



*Daryl Dowdell, Abigail Boudenyns, Brian Bina,  
Kimberly Streit*

### **Criminal Defense Clinic**

Interns supervised by Professor John Francis concentrate on criminal defense matters. They practice in Topeka Municipal Court, Shawnee County District Court and Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation Tribal Court. These interns are representing individuals in criminal defense cases such as theft, burglary, assault, possession of a controlled substance, social hosting and driving under the influence.

### **Children and Family Law Clinic**

Professor Lynette Petty supervises interns who are concentrating on family law and immigration matters. These interns make frequent court appearances in Shawnee County District Court representing clients in divorce cases. This group also represents foreign-born individuals in Immigration matters that fall under the Violence Against Women Act.

## Clinic Interns *Spring 2011* continued



*Stephanie Ferry, James Clark, Kristi Jarboe, Uriah Price, Victoria Winterberg, Sean Delpech, Robert Krattley, Jill Carlson*



*Brock Shannon, Courtney Archdekin, Ben Long, Monique McElwee, Kathy Wilson*

### **State Tribal Court Practice Clinic**

Professor Aliza Organick's interns represent clients in both family law and criminal defense matters. Their family law focus is mainly on divorce matters in Shawnee County District Court but are also representing a client in tribal court with an adoption. They practice in Topeka Municipal Court, Shawnee County District Court and Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation tribal court defending criminal cases such as domestic violence, possession of paraphernalia, and theft.

### **Civil Litigation Clinic**

Interns specializing in general civil matters under Professor Curtis Waugh's supervision have each prepared a will for their clients and most have also prepared Power of Attorney and Living Wills. They also represent individuals in matters involving contracts, consumer and landlord/tenant matters.



*Alex Bezu*



*Robert Mills*



*Krista Schultz*

### **Small Business and Transactional Clinic**

Interns accepted into Professor Janet Thompson Jackson's Small Business & Transactional Clinic assist small business owners with contracts, leases and licensing agreements. They also assist individuals with new small businesses by

counseling on entity choice and start-up matters. Currently, every non-profit organization who has sought tax exempt status through the clinic has been awarded the status.

## What are current interns saying about Law Clinic?



**Brian Bina**  
**Class of 2011**  
“Enrolling in the Washburn Law Clinic is my greatest legal decision to date. Being allowed to handle cases for clients in a learning

environment has allowed me to put classroom scenarios into real world situations. Learning the law is one thing, but practicing is something entirely different. The Law Clinic allows you to do both.”



**Laura Coughlin**  
**Class of 2011**

“After graduation I plan on moving back to Washington state where Washburn Law is not as well known. I personally know Washburn to be a

good school but future employers may not. So, having actual experience on my resume will help me stand out next to other lawyers who attended locally known schools. I also like that I won't be a green attorney when I start practicing. I will have already handled multiple cases from start to finish, including a full trial. I am very grateful for the opportunity to practice as a student and get that experience through the Washburn Law Clinic.”



**Michael Duma**  
**Class of 2011**

“Washburn Law Clinic is where the proverbial rubber meets the road. It allows students to remove themselves from the Ivory tower and apply what they

have learned in the real world. While law school teaches you the law, the Clinic teaches you how to practice law. The Clinic has been an invaluable

experience for me and I would recommend it to law students who wish to improve their legal skills in a real world setting.”

**Robert Krattley**  
**Class of 2011**

“I have thoroughly enjoyed my Clinic experience. It has provided a practical learning experience and enhanced my legal education, not just from a classroom but from a courtroom as well.”



**C. David Rouner**  
**Class of 2011**

“When the judge asks you for the party's appearances for the first time, it's nice to be winged by an experienced attorney.

The Law Clinic provides a lot of important 'first experiences' for students. Without the guidance of the Clinic staff, these otherwise common occurrences might just as well be presented in Latin for a third-year student. While law school course work teaches you to be an appellate judge, the Clinic teaches you to be a practicing lawyer.

I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to have spent two semesters at the Washburn Law Clinic. The staff, students and professors genuinely create the atmosphere of a law office. These experiences will be invaluable to the 2011 Clinic student graduates transitioning into the profession.”



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