

# News Briefs

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## *Public Interest: First Scholarship Awarded to Edna Reyes*



In 2007, faculty of the Washburn Law Clinic came together to establish the Washburn Law Clinic Public Interest Scholarship fund with the hope of helping future students in their final year of law school. Through the years, the scholarship fund grew with additional contributions from faculty and friends of the Clinic.

This past academic year, **Edna Reyes, '17**, was awarded the first Washburn Law Clinic Public Interest Scholarship for her commitment to public interest and her work in the Clinic.

“I have always felt a call to public interest work,” said Reyes. “I think it is because you get to see almost immediately the effect your work has on clients. The work is gratifying and reminds me of why I decided to go to law school in the first place—to help those who cannot help themselves. Receiving the Public Interest Scholarship was basically icing on the cake. When you invest time and effort into your clients, you do it for the impact it has on your clients’ life and for the experience, not for a reward. Nonetheless, I was thrilled to receive the scholarship while doing what I love to do.”

While at Washburn Law, Reyes received the Irvine E. Ungerman Award for Excellence in Clinical Practice. She served as president of the Hispanic-American Law Student Association, diversity chair of the Black Law Student Association, and as a member of the Washburn Law Trial Team. In the summer of 2015, Reyes interned at the 6th Judicial District Court, followed by a 2016 internship for the Department of Homeland Security.

“Attending Washburn Law has been one of my best journeys yet. The support I received from staff, professors, and friends at Washburn Law simulated the same support I received back home. I am a small-town girl and, like many, aspire to be part of something bigger in life. What seemed impossible three years ago finally became possible on May 13, 2017.”

Reyes, who is the first in her family to graduate, hopes to continue her public interest work and will begin her career as an associate immigration attorney at McDonald Tinker PA, a Wichita, Kan., based firm.

“Edna was truly deserving of this scholarship,” said Debi Schrock, managing director of administration, Washburn Law Clinic. “Edna has a real passion for public interest work. She was committed to her work in the Clinic and spent a considerable amount of time volunteering during her three years at Washburn Law.”

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## *Government Legal Careers: Opportunities Abound*

For the 10th straight year, members of nearly 30 agencies came together to discuss career opportunities and share their experiences with Washburn Law students. From the Federal Public Defender’s Office to the League of Kansas Municipalities to the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services to the Kansas Supreme Court, students spoke one-on-one with practicing attorneys and government officials at the 10th Annual Government Legal Careers Forum.

“We always have a tremendous response to this event, both from agency representatives and students,” said Tammy King,

director of professional development and pro bono. “Many of those who participate are Washburn Law graduates, but we certainly draw from a wide range of professionals with varied backgrounds and areas of expertise. They are excited to come and share their experiences and answer questions from our students.”

In addition to the networking opportunities, there is an Ethics Continuing Legal Education offering. This past year, the topic was Managing the Risk of a Data Breach: Ethical Obligations and Cybersecurity.

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## *Expert Testimony: 2L Student Testifies before U.S. Senate Subcommittee*

**Chris Turner, JD candidate '19**, brings a whole other career's worth of experience to his Washburn Law education. Turner is a 19-year veteran with the Kansas Highway Patrol and has reached the rank of captain.

It is because of this experience, Turner was chosen to represent law enforcement throughout the United States in his testimony before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety, and Security. Turner's past experience includes his work on national Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program initiatives and his position as vice president with the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance.

Prior to testifying, Turner consulted with Washburn University School of Law Dean Thomas Romig, who served four years as the 36th Judge Advocate General of the Army and retired from the military after 34 years of service. Turner's testimony focused on how to improve commercial motor vehicle safety, stressing three main concerns: stable, long-term funding; exemptions; and motor coach safety.



Seldom is a law student invited to testify before a U.S. Senate subcommittee. "This was the most humbling experience of my life," Turner said. Being asked to testify triggered a complex set of events. The most challenging was getting up to speed on the issues involved; preparation for potential questions and possible political issues our alliance did not want to wade into; and writing and submitting my written testimony on such short notice. Preparation for my oral testimony was daunting especially knowing how to answer possible landmine questions that could have severe backlash."

## *Foulston Siefkin Lecture: Legal Expert Harold Hongju Koh Featured*



Students and faculty alike filled a Washburn Law lecture hall this past spring as Harold Hongju Koh discussed "The Trump Administration and International Law." Koh is one of the country's leading experts and legal scholars in public and private international law, national security law, and human rights. He is a former dean of the Yale Law School, New Haven, Conn., where he is currently the Sterling Professor of International Law.

As the 40th annual Foulston Siefkin lecturer, Koh explored the key areas of U.S. foreign policy during the first months of the Trump administration, examining whether and to what extent the new administration can permanently change the nature of the U.S. relationship with international law and institutions.

Koh has a long and stellar career. He recently served as the 22nd legal adviser of the U.S. Department of State and as assistant secretary of state for the Democracy of Human Rights and Labor. As legal adviser, Koh received the secretary of state's Distinguished Service Award.

Koh has received 15 honorary degrees and more than 30 awards for his human rights work, including awards from Columbia Law School and the American Bar Association for his lifetime achievements in international law. He has co-authored eight books, published more than 180 articles, testified regularly before Congress, and litigated numerous cases involving international law issues in both the U.S. and international tribunals.

Foulston Siefkin LLP has sponsored this lecture series since 1978 to enrich the quality of education at Washburn Law. Articles derived from the lectures are published by the *Washburn Law Journal*.

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## *Making a Difference: Law Students Lead the Way*

Volunteering last spring at the SilverSparkle event, a pop-up prom shop in Topeka, to help young women find a prom dress at no charge, **Sarah Anderson, JD candidate '18**, was inspired.

“It was so touching to see these young women come in and find a prom dress they otherwise wouldn’t have,” Anderson said. “I realized the world is so much bigger than me. I grew up not having to worry about things like having a prom dress, so this was a new experience. It’s really broadened my perception of the world around me.”

Not surprising, Anderson, who will chair the 2017 Washburn Student Bar Association’s (WSBA) Barristers’ Ball, has selected Silverbackks as the recipient of next year’s Barristers’ Ball proceeds. Silverbackks, which sponsors SilverSparkle, is a grass-roots organization dedicated to serving the basics needs of the Topeka community—food, clothing, hygiene items, and so forth.

Anderson will have big shoes to fill as chair of the 2017 event. **Sarah Morrison, JD candidate '18**, was chair of the 2016 event. Under her leadership, the Barristers’ Ball committee raised more than \$10,000 for the Topeka Rescue Mission, with 250 people in attendance.

Following the longstanding tradition of the WSBA-sponsored event, Morrison and her committee, of which Anderson was a member, reached out to Law School faculty, alumni, and community organizations for donations for both a live and silent auction.

The committee is responsible for the entire event beginning to end. “One of the things that drew me to be chair is the combination of giving back and event planning,” Morrison said. “I did some of that as an undergraduate with my sorority, Alpha Sigma Alpha. Community service was an important part of what we did.”

Jalen Lowry, faculty advisor and associate dean, reiterated the amount of work that goes into the annual event. “I am very proud of how hard our students work on this event every year,” she said. “They find time to devote to this and make it a success year after year. It’s really gratifying to see them raise money for

worthwhile organizations in the community. Ms. Morrison did an amazing job last year, and I know Ms. Anderson will do so this year.”

In the past few years organizations such as Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Kansas Legal Services, the School of Equestrian Arts, Easterseals Capper Foundation, and the YWCA Center for Safety and Empowerment have been recipients of the funds raised via Barristers’ Ball.



**Top** – Sarah Morrison, left, and Monet Straub, right, present a check to Barry Feaker, executive director, Topeka Rescue Mission, the beneficiary of the 2016 Barristers’ Ball. **Left** – Sarah Anderson, chair of the 2017 Barristers’ Ball, and Sarah Morrison, chair of the 2016 Barristers’ Ball, are classmates and friends, both of whom entered their final year of law school this fall. Photos submitted.

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## *New faculty*



Michelle Y. Ewert joined the clinic in July 2017. Ewert was previously a clinical fellow at the University of Baltimore School of Law's Saul Ewing Civil Advocacy Clinic. Her career has focused on public interest law. She served as a staff attorney at HOPE Fair Housing in Wheaton, Illinois; staff attorney at Central California Legal Services in Visalia, Calif.; and staff attorney and housing law supervisor at the Homeless Persons Representation Project (HPRP), Baltimore, Maryland.



**Mary Lynch Matthews, '91**, joined the faculty as a visiting professor of law. She has been an adjunct professor at Washburn Law and in the Lawyering Skills program at the University of Kansas School of Law. Matthews has been a career law clerk to the Honorable James K. Logan of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit and a career law clerk to the Honorable Kathryn H. Vratil of the U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas.



Marsha Griggs is an associate professor of law and director of Academic Skills and Bar Passage. Griggs was the assistant dean for Academic Support and Bar Readiness at Texas Southern University's Thurgood Marshall School of Law and has worked in the area of standardized test and bar examination preparation for more than 20 years. She was inducted into the Texas Jury Verdicts Hall of Fame in 2014 and was selected as a 2016-17 administrator of the year by the Thurgood Marshall Student Bar Association.



Thomas Sneed, associate professor of law, is the newly named director of the Washburn Law Library. Prior career experience includes roles as the associate law librarian for research and electronic services at Emory University School of Law and reference librarian at Ohio State University Moritz College of Law. Previously, he served as a law clerk in the 4th Judicial Circuit of Kentucky and practiced for several years as a real estate and title insurance attorney.

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## *Hansen Foundation provides grants for rural internships*

The Dane G. Hansen Foundation has selected Washburn University School of Law to receive a grant to support an externship program as part of its Rural Law Program.

The opportunity to entice future lawyers to practice in rural America comes at a time when the number of lawyers available to serve people living in rural areas is disproportionately low. As reported in *The National Law Journal*, some residents of Nebraska have to travel 200 miles each way to reach the nearest lawyers, while Washington has one lawyer for every 12 people. Washburn Law is answering rural Americans' call to have increased access to justice by offering the Rural Law Program to its law students.

Students in the Rural Law Program are provided with an immersive externship experience in one of the 26 counties that the Hansen Foundation serves in northwest Kansas. Students

are enrolled in six hours of externship credit during the summer with full cost of tuition covered by the program. Because students are expected to live in their placement community, they also receive a living stipend of an additional \$5,000 to cover travel, housing, and related expenses during the program.

"The Hansen Foundation grant will allow Washburn Law students to try out rural law practice in these northwest Kansas communities," said Externship Program Director Shawn Leisinger. "Senior attorneys will get to share their experience and expertise while at the same time having an opportunity to see if these young lawyers might be a good fit for rural practice in their small towns. This is a wonderful program that will help to place law students and ultimately young lawyers in underserved rural areas, and is a win-win for the students, rural lawyers, and these communities."