



Veterans Clinic Launched

Clinic Supports Veterans and Service Members

The Veterans Legal Assistance Clinic (VLAC) was launched in the fall of 2014 to serve veterans and other service members living in Kansas. Four one-day Clinics have been held, during which free wills, living wills, and durable powers of attorney were provided. Despite inclement weather during two of the Clinic events, 57 people fell within financial guidelines and were served.

The Clinic is staffed by Washburn Law students who work pro bono under the close supervision of faculty. After the initial screening, upper-level Law Clinic interns, who have been certified by

the Kansas Supreme Court to be legal interns, meet with the clients and complete the process. “Washburn Law is honored to offer the Veterans Legal Assistance Clinic,” said Dean Thomas J. Romig, who retired as a Major General in the Army Judge Advocate General’s Corps in 2005 after 34 years of service. “We want to do our part to help address the continuing need in the veteran and military community for wills, living wills, and durable power of attorney.”

Future VLACs may provide different services that are needed by the community.

Students Recognized for Insight and Preparation

Extensive Work Done on Veterans Case

Professor Joe McKinney has been working on a veterans benefit case with a group of Washburn Law students and after numerous hours, their work is getting noticed, as they were commended by the official presiding over a debriefing conference.

The students represent a veteran injured during the Cold War who is appealing the Department of Veterans Affairs’ denial of his claim for service-related disability benefits. The circumstances surrounding his injuries, including the lapse of time between the date of injury and diagnosis of his disease, raise particularly difficult and intertwined factual and legal issues.

McKinney said that he and the students were privy to a telephone pre-briefing conference ordered by the U.S. Court of Appeals for

Veterans Claims. “What happens in prebriefing conferences is privileged. I can only say that the presiding official concluded that the arguments we put forth raise serious, interesting, and precedential questions that evidently had not been previously raised by any litigant. The official complimented the students on their preparation and insight and signed off with congratulations to the students of Washburn Law.”

The students are Courtney Kelley, Joe Pilgrim, John Nichols, Anastasia Willy, and (as a pro bono volunteer) Suzanne Lueker. Also instrumental were Melissa Leach and Jordan Clothier, students who prepared a memorandum for filing with the Court. Law Clinic Managing Director Debi Schrock provided material assistance.