

11-6-2012

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Recommended Citation

Roger Williams University School of Law, "Dean Logan's Blog: RWU Law Students Impact Lives via Experiential Learning Opportunities" (2012). *Law School Blogs*. 134.
https://docs.rwu.edu/law_pubs_blogs/134

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Dean Logan's Blog

RWU Law Students Impact Lives via Experiential Learning Opportunities

Posted by David Logan on 11/06/2012 at 08:59 AM

I am always proud of the accomplishments of members of the RWU Law community, but last week I learned of three remarkable ways that students honed their practical legal skills while helping the less fortunate.

First up: a victory by students in our Immigration Law Clinic. Luis Mancheno and Lipou Laliemthavisay, both 3Ls, appeared in Immigration Court in Boston, on behalf of a young Kenyan seeking protection under the Convention Against Torture, which provides refuge in the U.S. to those who can prove a danger of persecution or torture if repatriated; in this case the likelihood of imprisonment due to the criminalization of homosexuality in his home country. Building on work done in an earlier phase by Luis and Catherine Bednarz ('12), the RWU Law students convinced the Board of Immigration Appeals to grant the relief sought (a remand to the hearing officer); here's what a very proud Clinic Director Deb Gonzalez had to say about this victory:

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*This is a big win for the Clinic because discretionary findings of fact and credibility issues, which were at issue in this case, are very difficult to overturn. Essentially the students had to convince the BIA that the Immigration Judge, who personally heard the testimony and saw the client testify, got it wrong when he found the client not credible, and that Immigration Judge impermissibly used
”
is own personal beliefs with regard to sexuality to make his findings.*



Lipou Laliemthavisay



Luis Mancheno

Another of our 3Ls had the amazing experience of arguing before the Rhode Island Supreme Court. Here is the front page coverage of the case, [High court weighs sealing of records on Page A1 of Monday, October 29, 2012 issue of The Providence Journal](#), and here is what Priya Lakhi, the Director of the Criminal Defense Clinic, had to say about this terrific opportunity:

“ On October 23, two years of work in the Criminal Defense Clinic came to fruition with the oral argument of *State v. Morrice* in the Rhode Island Supreme Court. Student attorney Juliana McKittrick ('13) argued on behalf of Ms. Morrice, who sought the clinic's assistance with the sealing of her records. Due to changes in the law, what started as a routine motion to seal escalated to an appeal before the RI Supreme Court. Ms. McKittrick told the Court that prosecutors "promised" her client at the time of her five-year deferred sentence that her record would be sealed. However, the Attorney General has now objected to the sealing Ms. Morrice's records and the CD clinic argued that the "rug has been pulled out from under" our client. The brief that was submitted to the Supreme Court was written by Dylan Murphy ('12). This argument was a collaborative effort by many current and past student attorneys of the CD Clinic. I am very proud of the relentless, unyielding, passionate, and committed students we have in our clinic. Juliana was tactical, compassionate, and creative in her argument. She has a mind and a heart for persuasion. I give Juliana my highest praise and most sincere gratitude in this fight for justice. ”



Juliana McKittrick

Finally, four students from our innovative [Pro Bono Collaborative](#) (PBC) delivered a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) workshop in the Olneyville section of Providence (an area with a high

immigrant population). Eighteen individuals attended the workshop and three individuals were assisted with their immigration applications. Here's what their PBC supervisor Suzy Harrington-Steppen, J.D., had to say about the experience:

“*The evening began with Hans Bremer, Esq. (RWU Law ('08) and former PBC student) training four law students (Marcus Swift ('14), Hillary Black ('13), Jacqueline Hartley ('13), and Dylan Owens ('13)) and ended with three completed DACA applications for immigrant teenagers and many more receiving answers to their immigration questions. This was a true “PBC moment” for me as I watched these kids, with families looking on, sitting with our students as they worked through their immigration applications, reviewed the necessary documents and evidence, and developed a warm and professional rapport with those they were assisting. It was wonderful to see and made me very proud of the work we do.*”