

# The Defender: Coronavirus Edition

A mini  newsletter

Corona week 11  
May 29, 2020

## Graduation



Happy Friday! While the coronavirus will be with us for a very long time, life isn't just "all COVID, all the time." Time and lives go forward. This edition of the CV-Times celebrates graduations and rites of passage that remind us of this and remind us that while things are happening differently now, there is still fun to be had (see the smiles on Sarah Field's kids' faces after Jason did a cannonball during a Zoom meeting). Daughters, sons, and other family members of our coworkers have achieved so much – and have had the physical celebrations limited in a way we've never experienced. Today we celebrate and recognize them and brag on their accomplishments. We also celebrate a fresh crop of Limited Practitioners joining LOPD – new graduates who join us in the fight for the rights of our clients. They come from all over the country to offices all around New Mexico. Finally, we celebrate moving slowly, carefully back into our Mission of fully representing clients and serving our communities. As our new Reopening Plan outlines, we are expanding the number of people working in most offices on Monday, and we will open most offices to the public, in a modified, socially-distanced and CDC compliant way, on June 8. It's a concerning but exciting time. As our state and our offices move into summer and slowly reopen, and we carefully greet each other face to face again, let's remember these events, and these people and keep our lives moving forward.

- Ben

## Splash



Aztec Managing Attorney Sarah Field and her kids and other Zoomers laugh and smile at Juvenile Division Managing Attorney Jason Rael, who cannonballed into his pool in his clothes after wrapping up a Zoom meeting.

Graduation

# Starting with one of our own



Erin Gutierrez, case manager in the Gallup Office for about two years, obtained her bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from WNMU in 2017 and went on to obtain her Master's Degree in Criminal Justice with an emphasis in legal studies from GCU this month. Her future plan and goal is to obtain her Juris Doctorate and keep fighting the good fight. Here she is with her son, Noah.

*We are all very happy for her and proud of her! - Stephanie La Paz Johnson + LOPD*

## College and HS grads - congrats

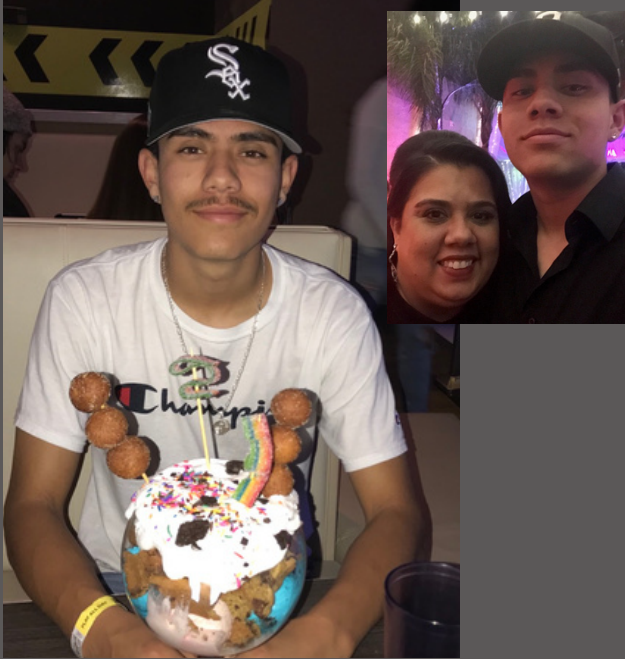
Thank you LOPD family for supporting me through these 19 years of my children's lives, whether babysitting while I had to work late, giving them rides to practice or school, or feeding them when I needed a helping hand, and the PRICELESS hugs I received when I thought I wasn't going to make it. THANK YOU LOPD FAMILY!!!

- Alma Duran



Alejandro Santiago Duran is the last of eight children to graduate from Las Cruces High School. He has 3 sisters and 4 brothers. He excelled in school, a true representative of the family and his high school. Alejandro was awarded the Senior Achievement Award. Alejandro plans to attend Dona Ana Community College in the Fall to study computer science programming.





Fernando Rosales attended Mark Armijo Academy in Albuquerque. He plans to work and study to become a welder and eventually a project manager and leader in the construction field. He enjoys soccer and upgrading parts and features on his car. He is the son of Albuquerque Metro office manager Veronica Rosales.

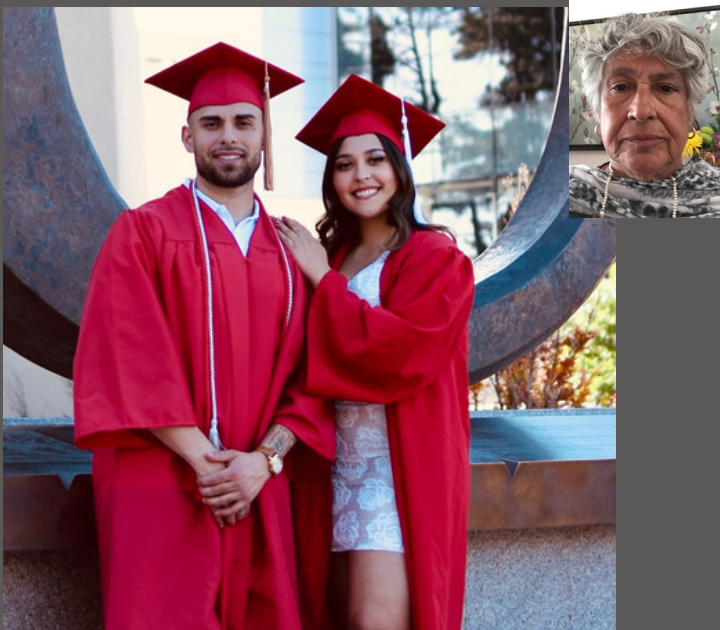
Isabel Fernandez recently graduated from New Mexico State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering, and a Bachelor of Science degree in aerospace engineering. She graduated with High Honors and was selected as Outstanding Senior for the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Department. She was inducted into NMSU's Sociedad de Ingenieros and Order of the Engineer. She will be attending the Georgia Institute of Technology in the fall to start her Masters Program in Aerospace Engineering. She is the daughter of Santa Fe investigator Joey Fernandez.



Contract Counsel's Monica Cruz's son Mario Cruz graduated from Rio Rancho High School. His plan is to become an electrical engineer. Monica says they are planning on having a drive by parade to celebrate his accomplishment.



Ciana Rose, 22, is the daughter of Juvenile Division attorney Dennica Torres. Ciana graduated from UNM with her bachelor's in business administration. She graduated from St. Pius X in 2016, where she was on the honor roll, earned a letter for community service and was a 4-year letterman for woman's soccer! After graduation, Ciana began working for Starbucks and worked her way up to assistant manager, which led to her decision to major in business. Ciana will be taking some time off for a year and hopes to transfer to California with Starbucks and later work toward her MBA or possibly go to law school.



Social Work Supervisor Louella Arellano's grandchildren Elias Marquez and Magdalena Marquez have graduated. Elias graduated with a degree in Management Information Systems/Cybersecurity and will stay at UNM to study for a Master of Science in Global & National Security. Magdalena graduated with a degree in psychology and sociology. Mags, as her grandmother calls her, will head to Highlands to pursue a master's degree in social work.

Brooke Isabella Padilla graduated from Taos High School. Her auntie, Taos secretary Angela Vasquez, says she has an awesome personality and one of the most beautiful smiles and contagious laughs. She was on the Tiger Classics Dance team, ran track and was the Taos Boys Varsity Basketball manager throughout her high school years. She wants to pursue Culinary Arts in the future, looking at going to Colorado. She is happy to be graduating and excited to start the new chapter in her life.







Alamogordo paralegal Cynthia Cairn's nephew Jacob Hammond graduated Saturday, May 23, from NMSU after three years with a Bachelor in Electrical Engineering. He will be leaving to Tucson on May 28th to begin his new journey with Raytheon. "We are so proud of him," she says.



Fredrick Jordan Smith is the son of Misti and Chris Valdez. Misti is the Senior Investigator for the MCDU. Fredrick is a Portales High School graduate who plans to attend a mechanical trade school. He is celebrating this special time with his parents, 4 siblings, and 2 nephews.



# Team LP

This year's cohort of Limited Practitioners has not had an easy time as coronavirus has canceled, or delayed, the Bar Exam. The exam is usually held in July, but it has now been delayed until maybe September. That has given new Training and Recruitment Director Liz Holmes quite the task of figuring out hiring dates and other logistics for the incoming lawyers, who must decide if they want to take on work hours while also preparing for the exam. But the hassle hasn't seemed to have dampened their enthusiasm, as you can see from their submitted bios. It certainly hasn't dampened ours!

*Welcome to LORD!*



Sai Iyer graduated from NYU Law in 2018 and has spent the last few years representing kids and adults in delinquency and criminal matters in Washington, DC. While he'll miss his former clients and colleagues, he is very excited to flee the east coast for good this summer and join the ABQ team!



Evan Stivers is a graduate of the City University of New York. During his time in law school he interned with the Office of the Capital Defender of Georgia, Yale's Challenging Mass Incarceration and Advanced Sentencing Clinic, and Legal Aid's Criminal Appeals Bureau. He is excited to join the Santa Fe office.



Rebekah Phelps is an alumna of the University of Georgia with a degree in Political Science and a legal studies certificate. She attended Cincinnati Law School and interned abroad in human rights. She became a certified legal intern at the Hamilton County PD's office to serve her community. When not at work, she likes to work out and walk her dog.





Lily Rowland grew up in Vermont but has spent the last nine years in Boston, where she graduated from Suffolk University Law School this May. She is really excited to start at the LOPD in the fall, as well as do more trail running and eat more (New) Mexican food!



Yarrow Allaire is a lifelong resident of the South Valley. In her free time, she likes to go to the gym, garden, and play with her pups. In quarantine, Yarrow has had to start running but has been doing lots of great work in the yard. Yarrow is very excited to be a public defender!



Erich Greiner is a 2020 graduate of Penn State Law. Originally from Bluffton, South Carolina, he attended the University of South Carolina-Columbia and graduated in 2017 with a B.A. in Criminology and Criminal Justice and a minor in Political Science. Erich looks forward to moving to the Land of Enchantment with his family and joining the Roswell LOPD team.



Jon T. Harris is a graduate of Texas Tech University School of Law. Jon's three decades in local, county, federal, and military law enforcement culminated with counter explosives/narcotics K9 operations for the Department of State overseas. He recognizes a screwed-up police investigation when he sees one and knows how to counter it, making him a powerful advocate for the accused.



Griffin Hardy graduated from the University of Michigan Law School earlier this month. He spent last summer at LOPD's Albuquerque office and is looking forward to getting back to New Mexico soon.



Lizdebeth Carrasco-Gallardo graduated from the University of New Mexico with a degree in Political Science and Spanish and completed her law school education at the UNM SOL. Lizdebeth is ready to empower her clients through her representation and ensure their process is as fair as possible.



Alix Fields recently graduated from Drexel Law in Philadelphia. She attended Ohio State for her undergraduate degree. Having always wanted to be a public defender, she is very excited for a change of landscape in New Mexico. In her free time she enjoys being outdoors and hiking. She is currently looking for a dog to join her in these activities.



Amy Lattari is originally from outside of Philadelphia but lived in Nashville for college and now Washington DC for law school. She has been working with indigent defendants since 1L and worked at public defender's offices in VA and in Philadelphia. She also worked at GW's immigration clinic. She, her boyfriend and dog are excited to be moving to the southwest!





Wolfgang Bomgardner is originally from Colorado but moved to Albuquerque to work at Metro Court and SJDC. Inspired by indigent defendants, he was a student attorney at Georgetown Law's Criminal Defense & Prisoner Advocacy Clinic and interned with public defenders in DC, Louisiana, and Virginia. He, his dog, and his partner are thrilled to return to Albuquerque and the mountains.



Renee E. Lewis is a UNM School of Law, Class of 2020 graduate. Before law school, Renee was a family law paralegal, with criminal and probate experience. Renee brings with her many legal and life skills such as drafting, research, analytical thinking, perseverance, determination, contemplation and creativity. She is a foodie and enjoys yoga, hiking, and reading.

## Please help identify clients for release effort

Since LOPD's Habeas Unit can't possibly handle all the work to get people out of prison at this time, and since our Writ generated attention and momentum but didn't lead to a systemic solution, a group of private attorneys is ready to help inmate release efforts pro bono. They just need to connect with the inmates who need help. We at LOPD can help with that. Do you know someone in prison now who should be out, either because they are almost done with their sentence or have health issues or other reasons? Send any clients you think are a possible candidate for early release to Sheila Lewis, [sheilainsantafe@gmail.com](mailto:sheilainsantafe@gmail.com), who is helping coordinate the Corona Release Pro Bono Army (not its official name).