

# THE DEFENDER

*Monthly newsletter of the  
New Mexico Law Offices of the Public Defender*



12th District Defender  
Matt Chavez

ABQ Metro attorney  
Javier Amaya



Student campers pose with LOPD volunteers during 2019 Law Camp.

## Message from the Chief



It's the time of year again when we get our next group of fresh lawyers, new attorneys right out of law school who've connected with our amazing Recruiting and Training Director Patricia Anders. We call them limited practitioners, and the program creates a great match for attorneys looking to get stable after law school with a fun and rewarding job, and for LOPD looking to bring in fresh new talent .

Started in 2016 by Deputy Chief Cydni Sanchez the Limited Practitioner Program attracts people who know what they want to do; they know they want to be public defenders, and we offer them a chance to get a lot of varied and hands-on experience quickly. We bring them in, pay them while they are waiting for their bar results, and then, when they become lawyers, they are all ready to go.



Mock trial gets underway in Metro Court.

## Law Camp

**LOPD helps  
host midschool  
experience**

Each summer, 24 middle schoolers from around the state get a free camp week put together by the New Mexico Hispanic Bar and supported by LOPD and other groups.

LOPD has supported the program for the last eight of the camp's 18 years.

Volunteers help students get a taste of college life and develop skills in research, critical thinking, and techniques of persuasion and debate.

For more pics, see page 6

See page 2 for more

## Laura and Shanta Hanish award created

The LOPD Commission has founded the Laura and Shanta Hanish Award to be given annually to the LOPD staff employee demonstrating excellence and dedication to our clients and the department. A recipient will be selected annually from nominations. Details are yet to be finalized.

## Complaint process refresher requested

Exactly how are LOPD employees supposed to report inappropriate and unethical peer or manager conduct?

LOPD commissioners agreed at their July meeting that they want to make sure everyone at the department knows the process and feels safe to report misbehavior.

How exactly that behavior should be best reported depends on each situation, HR Director Ron Herrera says, but in all circumstances there is and always should be a way to report safely and without fear of retaliation.

"Please don't forget that individuals that raise allegations have a constitutional and statutory right to do so," Herrera said.

**See page 8 for a direct message and reporting instructions from HR Director Ron Herrera**

## Las Cruces all moved



The Las Cruces office has moved into its new location, which Deputy Chief Jennifer Birmingham calls "gorgeous."



## Chief's Message

While it may be easy to look at each fresh group as new workhorses to help carry the load, they actually bring quite a bit more with them. They come in with energy, with new ideas. They ask questions like, "Why can't we do that?" or "Why do we do that this way?" And sometimes when our answer is, "Because we've never done it another way" or "It's always been that way," we can catch ourselves and think about why we've never done it another way or why we do it a certain way. So we help them get on their feet, and they, in turn, help us stay light on ours. Please take an opportunity to welcome each one of them to our team.

# LOPD welcomes the 2019 class of limited practitioners

Please welcome the latest group of limited practitioners, new law school graduates who are joining the department in advance of passing their bar exam. They train for a period of four to 14 weeks, participating in lengthy sessions on specific legal issues, docket and trial preparation, and litigation skills.

## **Albuquerque**

Alicia Follrod  
Anna Purcell  
Calla Wilson-  
Traisman  
Cameron Payette  
Grace Jennings  
Joshua Goldberg  
Lauren Gallaway

## **Albuquerque**

Logan Wexler  
Magdalena Kephart  
Maya Lindgren  
Mitha Nandagopalan  
Sara Klemundt  
Simon Suzuki  
Sofia Flores

## **Alamogordo**

Alexander Elbor

## **Hobbs**

Brianna Argueta

## **Las Cruces**

Isaac Dodd  
Krista Bailey

## **Carlsbad**

Keya Duncan

## **Clovis**

Tashika Curlee

## **Roswell**

Jordan Beal

# NM death row appeals win

Ten years after New Mexico abolished the death penalty, the state Supreme Court has saved the last two men from death row.

Timothy Allen, 55, and Robert Fry, 45, the last two people on death row in the state, will instead remain in prison sentenced to life, which in New Mexico is 30 years before a first chance at parole, a divided Supreme Court ruled in June. The two are serving sentences for other crimes.

The fight to keep and then get the two men off

death row has been fought by LOPD attorneys and contractors for more than two decades.

"This is a monumental decision vacating the last remaining death sentences in New Mexico and remanding for sentences of life imprisonment instead," said LOPD's Allison Jaramillo, assistant appellate defender.

The Court found that the death sentences in these two cases were statutorily disproportionate to the penalties imposed in similar cases.

# LOPD Anniversaries

## Celebrating 1, 5, 10 15, 20+ years

\*\* some anniversary dates include years at other state agencies. It's difficult to separate.



### 25 Years

**Eileen Chavez**, Bernalillo County  
investigator supervisor



### 15 Years

**Tanya Dickinson**, investigator  
in Bernalillo County

### 5 Years

**Vicky Carlton**, paralegal in Roswell

### 1 Year

**Veronica Fierro-Rosales**, office manager in Albuquerque  
**Briana Trias**, secretary in Albuquerque  
**Jennifer Jones**, CCLS paralegal

\*\*Thank you to Cassandra Montoya for compiling these lists.\*\*  
If your name was somehow left off a list, please know it was not on purpose.  
Just let Maggie Shepard know and she'll make it right in the next newsletter.

## Upcoming events

### Juvenile defense workshop

Aug. 16 - 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. A National Juvenile Defender Center-sponsored workshop for NM, Texas and Utah with a large group session via video followed by main breakout at Abq office with MCU attorney Stephen Taylor. Email [Patricia.Anders@lopdnm.us](mailto:Patricia.Anders@lopdnm.us) for more info.

### Aug 19-23 **New attorney training**

LOPD is bringing new attorneys from across the state together for training in Albuquerque August 19-23. Email [Patricia.Anders@lopdnm.us](mailto:Patricia.Anders@lopdnm.us) for additional information.

## Team changes

### Hello and welcome to:

Loretta Delafuente Chavez - CCLS financial specialist

Ileea Jaramillo - Albuquerque secretary

Kaitlan Ruckel, Ruidoso legal associate

Jennifer Smith - social worker

David Woodstock - Alamogordo attorney

Nicole Jones - Las Cruces secretary

# Bar exam lunch on the plaza



Abq Metro attorneys pooled their love in late July to provide lunch to all LOPD law clerks during their bar exam. "Let us ease the pain of sitting in a cold room for two days with free food—every law student's favorite thing," Metro attorney Alexandria Allen wrote to the group as they prepared for testing. Allen and Metro Managing Attorney Tonie Abeyta's team sponsored and organized the lunch in Civic Plaza for the several days of testing.

# LOPD, NMHBA host youth Law Camp

Thanks Matt Chavez for pictures



Volunteers pose as jurors for the 2019 Law Camp.



Student campers hold mock trial before real life Metro Court Judge Felicia Blea-Rivera.

Camp ends with a mock trial.

Deputy Chief Cydni Sanchez serves on the NMHBA committee by coordinating for the camp and helps recruit instructors.

The goal, she said, "is to target first generation college graduates to get them interested in college and law school and help give them a roadmap of how to navigate the process, and also how to be a lawyer."

The camp is sponsored and coordinated by LOPD, UNM, the NM Hispanic Bar Association, ENLACE and the NM State Bar Association.

"It is a wonderful way to give back to the community, help inspire them to consider attending college and law school," Sanchez said.

## Externs depart after successful summer



12th District Defender Matt Chavez snaps pics of attorney Nansi Singh and student practitioner Jesse Craig in Ruidoso.

LOPD's summer externs are departing, leaving their sponsor offices sad but proud.

Twelfth District's extern Jesse Craig, from UC Davis School of Law, impressed in a motion hearing as a student practitioner.

"His delivery was calm and collected, his understanding of the legal issues was very good," 12th District Defender Matt Chavez said. "We wish we could keep him!"

In Clovis, extern Alexander Gras, of the University of Texas-Austin, handled two cases in court as a student practitioner, both went to trial and he participated in picking the jury for one.

"Alex's client was acquitted of all charges, after he presented an excellent defense," 9th District Defender Ibukun Adepoju said.

### Farewell Externs

Santa Fe's Margie Rutledge - UNM School of Law and Dylan Baca - CUNY

Ruidoso's Jesse Craig - UC Davis School of Law

Clovis' Alexandra Gras - Univ. of Texas School of Law

Las Cruces' Ashlea Crumley - Mitchell Hamline School of Law

## Cleaning supply drive a success



Abq attorneys Jessica Alsup, left, and Alexandria Allen gather supplies donated to Crossroads for Women agency helping formerly incarcerated women.

Albuquerque's:

Aaron Cress, UNM School of Law

Christopher Molina, UNM SoL

Dan Goodwin, UNM SoL

Emma Easom, Univ. of Kansas SoL

Emmett Wynn, Univ. of Chicago Law School

Griffin Hardy, Univ. of Michigan Law School

Jenna Purpura, UNM SoL

Joel Robinson, UNM SoL

Sabrey Blakeney, UNM SoL

Sophia Cadena, Univ. of Oklahoma

Vanessa Hidalgo, UNM SoL

Victoria Leblanc-Vialpando, UNM SoL

Zacary Wilson-Fetrow, UNM SoL

# Message from HR

The LOPD is committed to a workplace environment in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Unfortunately, in any work environment, at some point and regardless of our job classification, a valid complaint may arise that needs to be reported to a supervisor or manager. The truth is, raising concerns about work related issues is not something we're all comfortable doing. It takes courage and trust to tell a supervisor or manager that an incident has occurred that may violate rules, policies or laws.



**HR Director Ron Herrera**

Although the recommended practice is to raise concerns with an immediate supervisor and attempt to resolve them informally, it may not always be appropriate. For example, if a supervisor is sexually harassing a subordinate, the employee is not expected to resolve the issue informally with the harassing supervisor. Rather, the employee should notify LOPD-HR and the supervisor's manager. However, if an employee is concerned with a co-worker's attendance, for example, they are encouraged to discuss it with their supervisor or contact LOPD-HR before filing a formal complaint. There may be a valid explanation, such as a flex schedule or approved leave. In that case, the manager may be able to inform the complainant that there is no violation – but will not be able to discuss the other employee's personal matters.

For concerns that cannot be resolved informally, the LOPD invites all employees to utilize the formal Employee Complaint procedure described in Subsection A of 10.12.6.13 NMAC, which can be accessed by visiting the LOPD website, or by requesting a copy from LOPD-HR. The 400.108.1 Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Retaliation procedure can also be viewed on the LOPD website. This procedure explains the roles and responsibilities of employees, supervisors/managers and HR to ensure a polite and professional work environment. It can also be utilized to also protect a client's right to receive services.

Please don't forget that individuals that raise allegations have a constitutional and statutory right to do so. Under the law, the person cannot be subjected to retaliation by any co-worker, or supervisor/manager, for making allegations of misconduct, even if others do not agree with the allegation. Retaliation may take many forms including, but not limited to, saying mean things to or about the individual, ostracizing this person, changing working conditions as a result of making the charge, or subjecting the individual to disciplinary action as a result of making the charge. We all must respect the right to bring a complaint or make a charge.

To contribute, correct, compliment or criticize newsletter content or to talk to LOPD Communication Specialist Maggie Shepard, contact her at [maggie.shepard@lopdm.us](mailto:maggie.shepard@lopdm.us) or (505) 690-4529. All newsletter content is compiled by Maggie Shepard and approved by LOPD leadership.