

## Bringing them in Bringing them up

LOPD Training and Recruitment Director focuses on getting fully staffed and well trained



Liz Holmes

The recruitment and retention of public defenders has been difficult for decades. It's just a part of doing this work. So now, too, is a fulltime Training and Recruitment Director at LOPD.

LOPD has had this position since 2019, and attorney Liz Holmes has held the post since 2020.

As we keep growing and getting more positions added, we have to find the people to fill them, said Deputy Chief Cydni Sanchez, who oversees the Administrative Services Division, which includes the Training and Recruitment Director position.

### Chief's message



Attending the new attorney training in Albuquerque a couple weeks ago was a great reminder to me of how great public defenders are when we come together, and of just how far this department has come in the last 10 years. LOPD has developed an excellent program for new attorneys, and many other programs, on-line and in person, that bring people together to get to know each other and improve client representation. Thank you Liz Holmes! And it reminds me of the solid reputation we ALL have built for this department over the last 10 years.







DD Dayna Jones from the 12th shares her experience with competency process



DD Matt Cockman of the 11th lays out the art of storytelling after moderating a mock client interview.

And once we find them, we need to keep them, and that requires training so they can do their jobs well with the right supports.

Liz is tasked with both of these challenges.

"It's a common complaint from public defenders that 'I got thrown into court without any training or guidance'," said Chief Public Defender Ben Baur. Cydni can attest to it.

"When I first started here in 2005, there was no training, absolutely none. You just went straight to court," Cydni said.

Now Liz has created and is evolving a comprehensive training program for newly-hired attorneys. One of the keys to its success so far is participation from more experienced attorneys within LOPD and outside experts. "It is important not only for the training aspect, but also because it brings new attorneys together from around the state for comradery and differing perspectives," Liz said.

"What we can see is that training and recruitment is an investment in our people, and Liz is really showing the exponential benefits of investing in someone good who can focus on it," Ben said.

## Chief's message cont.

That reputation is growing, and we're working to build it even more so we can continue to recruit top notch attorneys and staff. And there are other ways our accomplishments are being recognized. Last week, Deputy Chief Jennifer Barela and I accepted an award on behalf of the department at the annual conference of the National Legal Aid and Defender Association in Oakland. The award recognizes a department that is actively evolving and being creative in solving problems. And we had two attorneys, Nicole Hall and Joy Applewhite, who won prestigious awards in New Mexico legal circles. Some of you may remember the documentary that came last year and highlighted the Hobbs office. That film will be making a stop on its national tour in Albuquerque, we hope, sometime in January. Finally, we are beginning a new statewide project: filming our public defenders discussing their work and what it means to them, so that we can show prospective applicants and our communities what it is we really do. We think this will help with recruitment, and it is a fun and interesting way for us to see our coworkers, and ourselves, and appreciate what a special place this is. That can be easy to forget in the day to day. But what I see in this newsletter, and as I travel around the state and visit with you all, is an exceptional and growing team of professionals, committed to serving our clients and communities. I'm glad that you can see it here too. -Ben



# Halloween good times



Abq



Clovis Portales







Abq



Las Cruces





# Awards well deserved

## Nicole Hall wins NM Women's Bar Rising Star Award



Nicole Hall  
attorney, Aztec

This award goes to an attorney who has been practicing for fewer than five years and who has made strong contributions to their community in their practice and out.



*It's such an honor to be able to represent the department in this light. However, I would not be who I am today without the inspiration, motivation, and support of my colleagues here in Aztec and across the state.*

## Joy Applewhite wins NM Bar's Excellence in Well-Being Award



Joy Applewhite  
attorney, Hobbs

Joy was honored in June with this award to recognize an individual or organization that has made an outstanding positive contribution to the New Mexico legal community's well-being.

## Clara Shortridge Foltz Award 2023

This award – co-sponsored by the National Legal Aid & Defender Association (NLADA) and the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Legal Aid and Indigent Defendants – is awarded to an entire program, a division or branch, or a special project of public or indigent defense. The award was established in 1985 and named after the founder of the nation's public defender system: Clara S. Foltz, California's first female lawyer.





# Message from our team at the NAPD Racial Justice Conference



## From Ruidoso paralegal Katina Slaughter

Montgomery, Alabama was clearly the best suited location for the NAPD Racial Justice Conference. Montgomery, known as the Capital of Dreams, is rich in history full of racial injustice and the continued fight for equality and justice. The city welcomed NAPD and all the conference goers with warm smiles, good southern food, and was eager to share its battles—both triumphs and failures, for justice. The conference itself was an emotional roller coaster for most. The lineup of amazing speakers, including a powerful closing ceremony lead by Bryan Stevenson, made it easy to find your fire. We toured the Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, where visual representations of slavery and its evolution were an experience that can only be felt and cannot be put into words. The round table portion of the conference was a unique opportunity to collaborate with other public defenders about the injustices our clients face every day. These discussions afforded us to discuss experiences, issues, and resolutions from a perspective that only we as public defense understand. The Racial Justice conference was a reminder of just how far we have come, and just how far we still must go.

## From Abq investigator Patrick Barrett

A the conference I met a remarkable African American man named Stanley. Mr. Stanley was sentenced to life without the possibility of parole for possessing 28 grams of crack cocaine. I knew this older brother had a powerful story plus my spirit told me to learn more about his life. Mr. Stanley explained that he had spent 14 years behind bars before contacting the Equal Justice Initiative. Mr. Bryan Stevenson took his case and Mr. Stanley's conviction was commuted to life which allowed for him to be paroled. While listening to his story I became overwhelmed knowing that so many in the African American community have lost their lives to the carceral state but yet Mr. Stanley found a way to give back to his community by driving a shuttle bus and giving of his wisdom and sharing his story. Before departing ways, I asked Mr. Stanley what is the one thing you would like to do before leaving this earth and he looked me in my eyes and said son "I would like to VOTE"

During the closing ceremony Mr. Bryan Stevenson spoke about the power of storytelling and each one of our clients has a unique story and it's our job to amplify their life experience. My hope is that the LOPD as an organization never forget our stories as we CONTINUE TO FIGHT FOR JUSTICE.

I leave with this quote from Bryan Stevenson : Each of us is more than the worst thing we've ever done."



# Abq plaza outreach



LOPD joined in this year's Albuquerque Celebrates Recovery Day in Civic Plaza. A rotation of attorneys and social workers staffed our table.



## HR networking to help us network

Zac Olivas and Cristina Glass went to the 2023 Ignite Conference in Las Vegas, NV on October 17th-19th to meet with NeoGov. LOPD uses this company to post our vacant positions to the Government jobs website and provide hiring managers with applicant referrals. During the conference Zac and Cristina were able to network with other state agencies from around the country, learn about new features on our current products and how to use other products they offer.





# Film project begins



DD Julie Ball left watches as film makers Sarah and her husband Scott from Luminance Pictures set up the interview area in the Santa Fe office.

Filming has begun for two film projects:

- Client-centered education videos -- what happens after you've been arrested (court system map), how to look up a case online, how to handle virtual court, know your rights when interacting with police and more. These videos will go on our website, social media and could play in our lobbies and/or in the jails.
- Recruitment videos -- very high-quality films that show off our state, offices and people to help recruit and to help educate lawmakers and our communities about our work.

Communications Dir. Maggie Shepard is coordinating the project with the film crews and a consulting team of attorneys and staff. The project should be complete by May 2024.



# Santa Fe Partè



Santa Fe celebrates!

Up top they are celebrating Mark Dickson reaching 20 years at LOPD and a departing colleague.

At left they are enjoying the balcony patio view for a little Autumn lunch and potluck.

And below they are celebrating staff birthdays with cake.





# Welcome to the LOPD team!

Gina Duran	Paralegal	Zoe Glaser	Public Defender
Susannah Rogers	Public Defender	Alyssa Aragon	Public Defender
Betty Sedano	Senior Secretary	Amanda Padilla	Clerk
Chelsea Van Deventer	Public Defender	Andrew Lance	Public Defender
Hibah Lateef	Public Defender	Connor Bridges	Public Defender
Jana Padilla	Office Manager	Dallas Alfaro	Public Defender
Jeanne Riecke	Senior Secretary	Erick Sedano	IT Administrator
Jose Horta Campos	HR Admin	Erin Fitzgerald	Public Defender
Marisa Salazar	Program Administrator	Geran Landen	Public Defender
Richard Knight	Public Defender	Jamshed Jehangir	Public Defender
Richard Pacheco	Safety & Loss Control Coord.	Kaylina Barry	Financial Specialist
Robert Cardon	Deputy Chief Financial Officer	Killeen Carter	Public Defender
Sherri Whiterock	Senior Secretary	Liberty Sanborn	Public Defender
Amelia Ruffolo	Law Clerk	Matthew Gonzales	Public Defender
Angel Montoya	Secretary	Michael Gay	Public Defender
Ashley Sena	Case Manager	Michael White	Public Defender
Deena Daniel	Senior Secretary	Paloma Wheeler-Flores	Paralegal
LeGina Thomas	Case Manager	Sean Grady	Public Defender
Melissa Denetdale	Office Manager	Zachary Kolodny	Public Defender
Ugochuku Nwachuku	Law Clerk	Josephine Jamison	Public Defender
Gales Jones	Investigator	Lev Kandkhorov	Investigator
Jesse Craig	Public Defender	Crystal Longo	Legal Associate
Kelly Deer	Senior Secretary	Josephine Jamison	Public Defender
Christopher Arima	Public Defender	Lev Kandkhorov	Investigator
Eva Buchwald	Social Worker	Crystal Longo	Legal Associate
Jourdann Thrasher	Secretary	Roxanna Mason	Managing Attorney
		Orlinda Ashley	Public Defender
		Timothy Nuccio	Paralegal
		William Weeden	Public Defender



# LOPD Anniversaries

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

SEPTEMBER  
OCTOBER  
NOVEMBER

## 20 years

Mark Dickson  
Attorney SF

Jim Walker  
Attorney Alamo

## 15 years

Allison Jaramillo  
Appeals

## 10 years

Ray Conley MCDU  
Jaime Flores IT  
Tyler McCormick  
Cristal Gonzales  
Laura Mullins  
Sarah Pepin

## 5 years

Sean Beherec  
Samuel Jay  
Brittany Steudle  
Kasey Taylor  
Cody Briggs  
Katina Slaughter  
Avalita Williams  
Natalie Zerwekh  
James DeRossitt

## 1 year

Rosa Macias  
Juanita Maldonado  
Lindsey Chaney  
Luke Griffin  
Mercedes Hyder  
Miriam Perez  
Alexandria Otero  
Brian Encinias  
Candi Chavez  
Maria Ortiz

Kim Nguyen  
Lauren Miller  
Lily Clark  
Luke Jobe  
Meredith Carvell  
Neal Brubaker  
Nicholas Corbitt  
Patrick Barrett  
Peter Mcleod  
Santana Dominguez

Claire Cooley  
Elaria Youssef  
Haashir Lakhani  
Jaylena Pino-Van Etten  
Jayme Leadmon  
Sarah Habermaas  
Zoe Psiakis  
Samuel Ashman  
Sarah Wintermute  
Rashan Lawrence



# Farewells

## Retirement

Robert Work

Julie Kitch

Program Administrator Julie Kitch said farewell to LOPD, retiring at the end of October after 10 years at LOPD.

