THE DEFENDER

Newsletter of the New Mexico Law Offices of the Public Defender SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NOVEMBER 2023

Bringing them in

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

Bringing them up





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.

Liz Holmes 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

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.



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

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

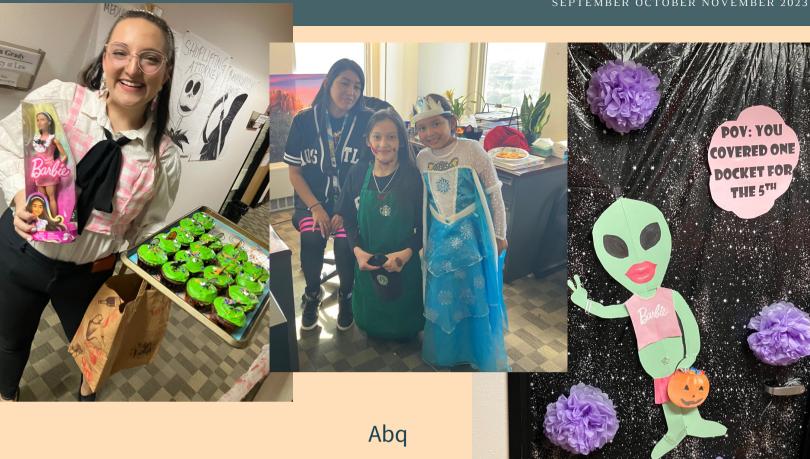






Clovis Portales







Las Cruces



Awards well deserved

Nicole Hall wins NM Women's Bar Rising Star Award



Nicole Hall attorney, Aztec

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.

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.



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

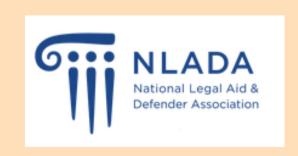


Joy Applewhite attorney, Hobbs

Joy was honored in June with this aware 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 battlesboth 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 possibly 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 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 that 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



Welcome to the LOPD team!

Gina Duran Susannah Rogers

Betty Sedano

Chelsea Van Deventer Public Defender

Hibah Lateef

Jana Padilla

Jeanne Riecke

Jose Horta Campos

Marisa Salazar

Richard Knight

Richard Pacheco

Robert Cardon

Sherri Whiterock

Amelia Ruffolo

Angel Montoya

Ashley Sena

Deena Daniel

LeGina Thomas

Melissa Denetdale

Ugochuku Nwachuku

Gales Jones

Jesse Craig

Kelly Deer

Christopher Arima

Eva Buchwald

Jourdann Thrasher

Paralegal

Public Defender

Senior Secretary

Public Defender

Office Manager

Senior Secretary

HR Admin

Program Administrator

Public Defender

Safety & Loss Control Coord. Kaylina Barry

Deputy Chief Financial Officer Killean Carter

Senior Secretary

Law Clerk

Secretary

Case Manager

Senior Secretary

Case Manager

Office Manager

Law Clerk

Investigator

Public Defender

Senior Secretary Public Defender

Social Worker

Secretary

70e Glaser

Alyssa Aragon

Amanda Padilla

Andrew Lance

Connor Bridges

Dallas Alfaro

Erick Sedano

Erin Fitzgerald Geran Landen

Jamshed Jehangir

Liberty Sanborn

Matthew Gonzales

Michael Gay

Michael White

Paloma Wheeler-Flores Paralegal

Sean Grady

Zachary Kolodny

Josephine Jamison

Lev Kandkhorov

Crystal Longo

Josephine Jamison

Lev Kandkhorov

Crystal Longo

Roxanna Mason

Orlinda Ashley

Timothy Nuccio

William Weeden

Public Defender

Public Defender

Clerk

Public Defender

Public Defender

Public Defender

IT Administrator

Public Defender

Public Defender

Public Defender

Financial Specialist

Public Defender

Public Defender

Public Defender

Public Defender

Public Defender

Public Defender

Public Defender

Public Defender

Investigator

Legal Associate

Public Defender

Investigator

Legal Associate

Managing Attorney

Public Defender

Paralegal

Public Defender

LOPD Anniversaries

SEPTEMBER OCTOBER

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

20 years

Mark Dickson Jim Walker **Attorney Alamo** Attorney SF

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 Kim Nguyen Juanita Maldonado **Lindsey Chaney** Luke Griffin Mercedes Hyder Miriam Perez Alexandria Otero **Brian Encinias** Candi Chavez Maria Ortiz

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

^{**}Thank you to the HR team 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.

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.



To contribute, correct, compliment or criticize newsletter content or to talk to Communication Director Maggie Shepard, contact her at maggie.shepard@lopdnm.us or (505) 690-4529.

All newsletter content is compiled by Maggie Shepard and approved by LOPD leadership.