

W.W. CARUTH, JR. CHILD ADVOCACY CLINIC

September Newsletter



SMU Dedman School of Law Celebrates 75 Years of Legal Clinics

The SMU Dedman School of Law is proud to celebrate 75 years of its Clinic Program. The Clinical Program began in 1947 and has since grown to include 10 specialized clinics and projects where, under the supervision of clinic directors, Dedman students serve as advocates on behalf of the community in many areas of the law. These practice areas include advocacy for children facing abuse and neglect, representation to survivors of domestic violence, representation to indigent individuals facing criminal consequences and more.

Join us by attending the “75 Years of Legal Clinics: Celebrating the Past while Looking to the Future.” Please RSVP through the link below. The Keynote Speaker for the event is Deborah N. Archer, the President of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). The talk will take place on October 6, 2023 from 12:30 - 1:30 with a reception immediately following.

RSVP HERE:

[HTTPS://SMU-FORMS.LIBWIZARD.COM/ID/4B0C48BE31A24CD497685A91C473A164](https://smu-forms.libwizard.com/id/4B0C48BE31A24CD497685A91C473A164)

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MEET THE CHILD ADVOCACY CLINIC



This Fall, we are joined by second-year law students: Mia, Lauren, Bailey, Brooke, Ryan, and Valeria. We are also joined by a third-year law students, Eleanor & Sara. Our associates have diverse backgrounds including experience working as a pediatric emergency room nurse and immigrating to the United States from Pakistan. In addition, we are fortunate to have Isabela, Karen, and Lexy return to the Clinic this semester as Chiefs!

HARD AT WORK!

CLASS

This semester our clinic associates will draft motions, conduct cross-examinations, practice introducing exhibits, and hear from guest speakers on topics such as gender-affirming care in CPS cases, and attachment theory for children who have gone through trauma.

COURT

Clinic associates, Sara & Valeria, had their first experience in court. Valeria said she had the chance to “explain to the judge how and why we would be requesting substituted service.” Sara said, “the experience was both an honor and a valuable learning opportunity.”

TRAC

This fall, our clinic associates will engage the community and travel to Fort Worth for “TRAC Resource Days” at various times throughout the semester. They will work on name change requests, sealing juvenile records, housing issues and more for youth who have aged out of care.

PODCAST

Our associates have already begun meeting with their interviewees for the Aged Out podcast. Stay tuned for updates and be sure to listen to our new episodes, available on Apple podcasts and Spotify.



AGED OUT™
The Stories That Built Us

Aged Out: The Stories that Built Us™ is a collection of recordings that provide insight into the child welfare system through the eyes of former foster children who grew up under and then aged out of State care. The mission of the podcast is to empower our speakers by having their voices heard, using their stories to educate the public, and creating a forum for their perspectives to improve the foster care system.

Check us out on social media:
 Facebook: @AgedOutProject
 Twitter: @AgedOutProject
 Email: AgedOutProject@gmail.com

Now available on iTunes and Spotify!
 Search "Aged Out Project" in the podcast section

The views and opinions expressed in this podcast are those of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of SMU or the W.W. Caruth, Jr. Foundation.

AGED OUT: THE STORIES THAT BUILD US

The Aged Out podcast is a project started by student associates in 2018. Since its inception, the clinic has published over twenty episodes from aged out youth. Episodes from our interviewees include stories from foster care, emergency shelters, experience in court, and triumphs such as earning graduate degrees and becoming child advocates. If you are interested in being a part of the project or know anyone who would like to share their story please message us on instagram (@agedoutproject) or (agedoutproject@gmail.com).

Retrospect: A Look Back at What We've Accomplished

The W.W. Caruth, Jr. Child Advocacy Clinic was founded in 2001 with the goal of educating law students, lawyers, and child welfare professionals to provide vital assistance to better the lives of abused and neglected children. The Clinic has included over 300 law students, many serving under the direction of Director, Diane Sumoski.

Over the past two decades, the Clinic has taken on over 200 cases including termination, reunification, permanency, and aged out youth. The Clinic students have acted as student attorneys speaking in court, drafting motions and orders for court, providing legal advice at "Ask a Lawyer Sessions" for aged youth, and sharing important stories in the Aged Out podcast.



DIRECTOR, DIANE SUMOSKI'S MESSAGE

Seventy-five years of clinical education at SMU Law is an extraordinary milestone that is emblematic of the law school's often unrecognized dedication to public service. The Child Advocacy Clinic has been part of this remarkable tradition for 22 of those years. I'm honored to have directed the Clinic for over 10 years now; indeed, this semester, I am teaching and learning from my 21st class of students. I urge you, our clinic alumni, to reflect on your first child client in this clinic and what you

learned from that child and family. Your number of days serving that child may have been relatively small in the grand scheme of time, but your impact was larger than you know. The impressive numbers keep growing – but what really matters is the stellar quality of the services we provide here at the Clinics – a tradition the Child Advocacy Clinic continues to honor each passing day.