



ALL THINGS IGNATIAN

Celebrating Mission at Creighton University

MILTON R. ABRAHAMS CLINICAL PROGRAM

EDUCATING STUDENTS IN THE SERVICE OF OTHERS

Prof. Catherine Mahern - Kearney Chair in Clinical Legal Education

Civil Practice Clinic

Since 1993, the civil practice clinic has represented low-income residents in the Omaha area in a variety of legal needs. From initial client interview to trial, or even appeal, 3rd-year law students in the clinic assume primary responsibility for each client's case. In addition to the important legal skills students learn, they are also exposed to the critical shortage of lawyers serving low-income communities, and are encouraged to enter the practice of law with a commitment to performing pro bono services to the community.

SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE:

Research has shown that the most effective service for helping a victim of domestic abuse is access to legal services. Because people in abusive relationships often have intertwined lives due to children and joint financial obligations, even after an abusive relationship is over, an abuser will find ways to continue the abuse in new forms. Because of this dynamic, the civil clinic commits to representing survivors for up to 24 months in any legal matter arising from the relationship, or that would compromise the client's ability to remain independent of the abuser.

SAFE, HEALTHY, AND SUSTAINABLE HOUSING

Many low-income families spend up to 50% of their income on housing, and often this housing is in very poor condition. Children under the age of five, who spend most of their lives inside their family home, are particularly vulnerable to poor health outcomes as a result of their home environment. Exposure to lead in young children can result in life-long disability, and mold in the home can trigger serious asthma in these children. The clinic is committed to providing legal advocacy around issues of housing habitability. Holding landlord's accountable through litigation has been an effective tool in alleviating these health hazards for families.

Living the Mission

In 1996 Patricia bought her own home in North Omaha, or so she thought. In late 2017 her granddaughter and her three-year-old great-grandson came to live with her. It wasn't long before it was discovered that her great-grandson had a seriously high level of lead in his blood, and that the source was Patricia's home. Although Patricia would qualify for assistance from a local non-profit agency to remediate the lead problem, the agency discovered that Patricia was not the lawful owner of her home. Her case was referred to the Clinic. Students worked diligently to clear the title to the property, at no expense to Patricia. Soon after the title was cleared in Patricia's name work began on her home, and it is now safe for Patricia and her family.



Omaha is the home of a large community of Karen and Kareni refugees, and like many refugees they immigrate together as a family unit. Once they arrive they can be confronted by legal issues completely foreign to them. If a refugee immigrates with a niece, nephew, or sibling that is a minor, or disabled, they will find that they cannot consent to medical care for that family member, and will not qualify for public benefits for them. The clinic represented a young woman refugee with a disabled adult brother. Through the clinic she became his guardian, and was able to apply for a waiver of the citizenship exam due to his disability. He is now a U. S. Citizen, and enjoys all the rights and privileges all Americans enjoy.

Immigrant and Refugee Clinic

In 2017, Creighton Law School enrolled 2nd and 3rd year law students for the new Immigrant and Refugee Clinic. This Clinic, operating in conjunction with the Immigrant Legal Center, provides much needed legal services to asylum seekers and refugees. Students learn more than valuable legal skills, they are educated in the issues confronting immigrants in the United States, as well as the difficult, and often extremely dangerous situations in their home countries.



Students have represented clients from Zimbabwe, Guatemala, Syria, Iraq, El Salvador, Honduras, Pakistan, Gambia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Mexico, Jordan and Afghanistan, and even a Dreamer enrolled at Creighton University. Whether it is a family fleeing persecution from MS-13, a young mother fleeing domestic violence, or a person fleeing to escape politically-motivated torture, each client is provided life-changing representation by students who have taken on this tremendous responsibility.



MISSION WEEK