

# Susannah Volpe

## **Immigrants' Rights / International Human Rights Clinic, Seton Hall Law School, Newark NJ**

*Visiting Assistant Clinical Professor, July 2018—Present*

Supervise student attorneys representing immigrant clients in removal proceedings before EOIR and presenting affirmative applications before DHS and sub-agencies.

## **Ayuda, Washington DC**

*Associate Director, DC Immigration, May 2017- July 2018*

*Managing Attorney, DC Immigration, July 2016- May 2017*

Supervised team of nine attorneys, accredited representatives, and support staff. Represented over 120 clients in matters before the Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR), U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS), and the U.S. Department of State (DOS). Managed budget of over \$2,000,000 including federal, state, and District grants, and client fee revenue. Responsible to ensure accurate client data, timely financial and performance reports, and compliance with grant conditions for 6 federal, state and local grants and 2 private foundation grants.

Notable Matters include:

- Supervised team of three law students representing an asylum seeker presenting an affirmative application before USCIS for protection due to gender-based and religious persecution. (In partnership with The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law, Columbus Community Legal Services, Civil Practice Clinic).
- Mentored pro bono attorneys representing clients in Immigration Court applying for various forms of relief including asylum, T visas, U visas, & Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS); mentor court-appointed attorneys to obtain SIJS predicate orders for minor wards of the state.
- Wrote motion to reopen withholding-only proceedings based on ineffective assistance of counsel—motion granted for client to pursue withholding of removal due to gender-based persecution.
- In collaboration with pro bono counsel and legal service providers, wrote '*What if I'm Picked up by ICE; Guide for Immigrant Parents in DC*,' providing DC immigrant parents information on maintaining custody in the face of immigration enforcement actions.
- Wrote and managed two interdisciplinary government grants that require staff supervision and client representation across two legal teams and a social service team.
- Implemented new referral process for cross-department referrals, increasing responsiveness to client needs and ensuring that clients receive holistic multi-disciplinary services.
- Hired and trained five new immigration staff members. (3 attorneys; 2 paralegals).

## **Walker Gates Vela, P.L.L.C., Austin, TX**

*Associate Attorney, November 2013- June 2016*

Represented clients before the EOIR, State, and Federal courts, USCIS, and DOS. Represented clients detained in immigration detention centers throughout central Texas, including client families detained at the Karnes County Residential Center and the South Texas Family Residential Center.

detention centers. Provided criminal defense to clients accused of misdemeanor charges in Texas state courts in Travis and Williamson Counties.

Cases filed include: Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) petitions, SIJS family court filings, U nonimmigrant visas, T visas for victims of human trafficking, asylum (UAC clients, adult clients, & accompanied minor clients), credible fear and reasonable fear interview reviews, consular processing, I-

601A waivers, family-based and Cuban adjustment of status, 212h waivers, naturalization, acquired citizenship, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Temporary Protected Status & post-conviction relief in the form of writs of habeas corpus.

Notable matters include:

- Appealed Immigration Judge's denial of asylum to a mother and child claiming asylum from El Salvador based on religion and family membership grounds—BIA overturned Immigration Judge's order.
- Advocated for a mother and two children detained at Karnes County Residential Center pursuant to DHS' no-bond policy—clients paroled from detention.
- Filed federal habeas corpus suit to challenge prolonged post-removal order detention of client with a pending U visa application—DHS released client.
- Filed 212h waiver for client accused of aggravated assault of a pregnant woman—client granted permanent residency.
- Filed three habeas corpus writs in criminal court to reopen and vacate criminal drug charges for client rendering him ineligible for immigration relief—all writs granted.
- Wrote memo to County Attorney of Travis County on criminal consequences of assault/family violence conviction for immigrant client resulting in conditional dismissal of criminal charge.

### **Immigration Legal Services, Catholic Charities of Central Texas, Austin, TX**

*Staff Attorney*, December 2011- November 2013

*Legal Assistant*, August 2011- November 2011

Managed caseload of over 200 clients before EOIR, USCIS, and DOS. Represented clients in state courts throughout central Texas to obtain court orders required to petition for SIJ status. Selected & supervised law students representing clients in U visa applications.

Cases filed include: SIJS petitions & state court filings, U nonimmigrant visas, VAWA petitions, asylee relative petitions, family-based and refugee adjustment of status, consular processing, naturalization, removal of conditions on conditional residence, I-751 battered spouse waivers, Temporary Protected Status, acquired citizenship claims, & DACA.

Notable matters include:

- First attorney at organization to file SIJS petitions for clients in Travis County, Texas family courts.
- Made novel argument in Brazos County family court concerning abandonment by unknown parent as basis for SIJS finding—SIJS petition signed by state court judge; SIJS and residency granted by USCIS.

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### **EDUCATION**

#### **The University of Texas School of Law**

Austin, TX. J.D., May 2011

*Awards:* *William Wayne Justice Center for Public Interest Law Graduating Student Award* (2011). Faculty award presented to six graduating students.  
*Texas Law Fellowships Excellence in Public Interest Award* (2011). Award presented to two graduating students selected by their peers.  
*Public Service Scholar for the William Wayne Justice Center* (2010). Elected position.  
*Travis County Women Lawyers Association Mary Pearl Williams Scholarship* (2010).  
*Peggy Browning Fellowship in Labor and Employment Law* (2009).

*Activities:* Public Interest Law Association- President (2010-2011); Board Member (2009-2010).

Negotiation Competition: Best Advocate (2010), Winning Team (2010).

Research Assistant to Director of Pro Bono Program (2009-2011). Aided in creation & implementation of pro bono pledge at law school.

### **Swarthmore College**

Swarthmore, PA. B.A. Sociology & Anthropology, May 2005.

*Awards:* Deans' Award for Sustained Commitment to Community (2005).

*Activities:* Women's Resource Center, Board Director (2002-2005).

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### **PRESENTATIONS & TRAININGS**

*Pursuing U Visas under Trump: Advanced Topics & Emerging Issues*, Sept. 14, 2017. CLE. Asista, Presenter & Faculty Member.

*Advocating for the Immigrant Child*, August 2017. CLE. 40<sup>th</sup> National Child Welfare, Juvenile, & Family Law Conference, National Association of Counsel for Children. Presenter & Author.

*The Experience of Immigrants in DC Courts*, June 16, 2017, Washington Council of Lawyers. Presenter.

*The DC Landscape for Immigrant Victims of Crime*, April 21, 2017, DC Victim Advocates Network, Office of Victims Services & Justice Grants, Executive Office of the Mayor. Presenter.

*Opciones de Inmigracion para Niños y Familias*, Sept. 17, 2016, Youth & Family Resource Fair, DC Public Schools, Language Acquisition Division. Author & Presenter.

*Tips for Experts in Presenting Oral Testimony*, October 23, 2015, Institute for Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault, University of Texas School of Social Work. Author & Presenter.

*Introduction to Removal Proceedings*, October 5, 2015. CLE. Fundamentals of Immigration & Nationality Law Conference, University of Texas School of Law. Co-author & Co-presenter.

*Immigration Law for Family Practitioners*, June 19, 2015. CLE. State Bar of Texas Annual Meeting. Author & Co-presenter.

*Citizenship & Immigration Issues*, May 6, 2015. Texas Department of Aging & Disability Services. Author & Co-presenter.

*The Desperate Lawyers of Travis County: The Ethical Obligations of Practicing Criminal Law with Immigrant Clients*, November 21, 2014. CLE. Travis County Criminal Defense Lawyers Association. Author & Co-presenter.

*SIJS Training, SAPCR, and SIJS Process*, August 20, 2014. CLE. Volunteer Legal Services. Co-presenter.

*Special Immigrant Juvenile Status: Preserving Immigration Options for Non-Citizen Minors*. October 17, 2013. CLE. Court Appointed Family Advocates section of the Austin Bar Association. Author & Presenter.

*The DREAM Act: History & Future*. March 26, 2013. Presentation to undergraduate class. The University of Texas School of Natural Sciences. Co-author & Presenter.

*Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals: Maintaining Eligibility with Criminal Issues*. September 26, 2012. CLE. Austin Criminal Defense Lawyers' Association. Co-author & Presenter.

*U Visa Pro Bono Project for Law Students*. Fall 2012, 2013. Organized by the University of Texas School of Law Pro Bono Program & Immigration Legal Services at Catholic Charities of Central Texas. Wrote and implemented student training. Supervised law students preparing U visa applications for individual clients.

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#### EXPERT TESTIMONY

Named declarant in motion for class certification for class of Temporary Protected Status holders in *Moreno v. Nielsen*, 1:18-cv-01135 (E.D.N.Y., Feb. 22, 2018).

*Access to Justice for Immigrants Amendment Act of 2017*. Hearing on B22-0080 before the Committee on the Judiciary & Public Safety, Council of the District of Columbia (July 12, 2017).

*Sense of the Council Regarding Federal Immigration Raids Resolution of 2016*. Hearing on PR 21-617 before the Committee of the Whole, Council of the District of Columbia (November 17, 2016).

Expert witness in Williamson County District Court in divorce and child custody case concerning impact of immigration status of non-citizen spouse. June 2015.

Expert witness in Travis County District Court in divorce and child custody case concerning impact of immigration status of non-citizen spouse. June-August 2012.

#### LANGUAGES

French: written and spoken fluency

Spanish: written and spoken fluency

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#### BAR ADMISSIONS

- State of Texas
- United States District Court, Western District of Texas
- United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit