

# LEGAL CLINIC



Drake Law School's clinical programs allow students to apply classroom knowledge to real-world situations. Working with clients who might not otherwise have access to legal assistance, students analyze complex information, research possible solutions, develop advocacy strategies, and negotiate and mediate. Under faculty supervision, students may appear as counsel on civil and misdemeanor criminal matters and represent clients before the Iowa Court of Appeals or the Iowa Supreme Court. Participation in clinical programs provides students with a core set of lawyering skills that can directly transfer to any practice setting upon graduation.

## Clinic Facilities

The 40,000-square foot Neal and Bea Smith Law Center houses the Law School's clinical programs. The building includes classrooms, conference rooms, offices, a library, a technically advanced courtroom, and student work areas. In addition to being used for the clinic and skills courses, the courtroom is also available for Iowa District Court hearings, Iowa Supreme Court arguments, and federal appellate hearings, which are open for student observation.

## First-Year Trial Practicum

The First-Year Trial Practicum, the only program of its kind in the nation, adds an important experiential learning dimension to Drake Law School's curriculum. Students observe a real jury trial in its entirety in the courtroom of the Legal Clinic. A combination of small group discussions, practice panels, lectures, and debriefings with litigants and jurors allows students to witness the integration of legal theory and law practice.

## Clinical Programs

### **General Civil Practice Clinic/Advanced General Civil Practice Clinic**

Students in this clinic assist clients in cases involving civil matters. Students conduct interviews and investigations, draft legal documents, handle negotiations and mediation, and represent clients in court hearings and trials, including jury trials. Typical cases include landlord/tenant disputes, dissolutions, domestic abuse, contempt proceedings, guardianships, and small claims.

### **Wrongful Convictions Clinic**

Students enrolled in the Wrongful Convictions Clinic participate in the representation of persons who have been convicted of crimes and have potential claims of innocence. The Clinic works in partnership with the Midwest Innocence Project (MIP) to investigate and litigate cases in state post conviction proceedings and federal habeas. Students work with the faculty director to investigate, communicate with and visit incarcerated clients, research legal issues, draft legal pleadings, and when necessary, assist in litigation.

### **Criminal Defense Clinic/Advanced Criminal Defense Clinic**

In these clinical programs, students are appointed by the court to represent indigent clients in criminal matters. The clinics are designed to give students a representative experience as a criminal defense attorney. Students begin by representing clients through the arraignment process and advance through the semester to representing clients in hearings, negotiations, and at trial, including jury trials.

### **Children's Rights Clinic**

Students enrolled in this multidisciplinary program represent children in a variety of cases, practicing in the juvenile court. They represent abused and/or neglected children as their guardian ad litem and attorney, and as a defense attorney for youth accused of committing a crime in juvenile delinquency proceedings. In addition, students work on other related legal and policy matters, such as guardianships and access to education.

### **Entrepreneurial/Transactional Clinic**

Students provide legal assistance to business startups, entrepreneurs, and community nonprofit organizations, including advising about choice of entity and drafting organizational documents. In addition, cases may involve issues such as intellectual property protections, employment policies, Sub-S elections, leases, purchase agreements, financing arrangements, buy-sell agreements, and independent contractor agreements.

### **Refugee Clinic**

Refugee Clinic students provide legal representation to non-citizens in their applications for asylum before the U.S. government. Cases may include affirmative asylum cases before the Department of Homeland Security, defensive asylum cases before the Department of Justice Executive Office for Immigration Review, and appeals before the Board of Immigration Appeals and the federal Courts of Appeal. The clinic receives client referrals from non-profit organizations across the state of Iowa.

## Clinic Faculty

**Suzan Pritchett**, Director of Clinical and Experiential Education and Professor of Law, oversees the Drake Legal Clinic and coordinates the Refugee Clinic.

**Sally Frank**, Professor of Law, supervises students handling civil cases before both trial and appellate courts.

**Allison McCarthy**, Clinical Teaching Fellow, supervises students handling cases in the Refugee Clinic.

**Robert R. Rigg**, Professor of Law and Director of the Criminal Defense Clinic, supervises students handling criminal cases before both trial and appellate courts.

**Nicholas Roby**, Clinician in Residence, directs the Entrepreneurial/Transactional Clinic and staff.

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