

Helena Marissa Montes, Esq.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Loyola Law School, Los Angeles Immigrant Justice Clinic (“LIJC”), Los Angeles, California

Founder/Director/Visiting Associate Clinical Professor

January 2013- Present

Teach both substantive and procedural law as it relates to clients’ cases and the lawyering and advocacy skills necessary to be an effective immigrants’ rights attorney. Develop curriculum and teaching materials, evaluate students, select clients and manage clinic operations. Supervise and mentor students representing indigent noncitizen clients seeking humanitarian forms of relief, including survivors of trafficking and severe persecution, located in the East Los Angeles area, specifically the constituents of Dolores Mission Parish and Homeboy Industries. Review students written work, client interactions and oral advocacy in a variety of matters, including minors seeking special immigrant juvenile status, applications to secure status for survivors of crime, litigation and advocacy projects. Direct community workshops and forums targeted at educating community members in a variety of immigration related issues. Developed and launched Loyola’s Immigration Law and Border Practicum, where students provided free legal representation to immigrants in removal proceedings before the Executive Office of Immigration Review in El Paso, Texas.

Los Angeles District Attorney George Gascon’s Transition Team, Los Angeles, California

November 2020-Present

Immigration Committee Member

Appointed by District Attorney Elect George Gascon to serve on the immigration committee of his transition team.

Responsibilities include drafting the Los Angeles District Attorney’s policy directives regarding the treatment of immigrant victims and defendants, in particular as to the immigration consequences of criminal convictions and protocols regarding U and T visa certifications for survivors of crime and trafficking.

Commission on Civil and Human Rights, Los Angeles, California

Civil and Human Rights Commissioner, Vice Chair and Chair

September 2019- May 2023

Appointed by Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti to serve as a commissioner on the newly created Los Angeles Commission on Civil and Human Rights. Responsibilities include overseeing complaints brought forth by Los Angeles Residents and drafting recommendations as to anti-discriminatory law and policy that is to be presented to the city. Engage in community events and dialogue on behalf of the commission have assisted in the drafting of commission bylaws.

ITESO- Universidad Jesuita de Guadalajara, Tlaquepaque, Jalisco, Mexico

Visiting Professor

Summers of 2018-2023

Responsibilities include teaching comparative law course in Mexican and United States “Immigration, Asylum and Refugee law” to undergraduate students studying in the areas of international relations, political science, law and sociology. Course includes exposure to alternative U.S. immigration humanitarian forms of relief, current events and application of the law through actual case studies. Course was taught in Spanish. Serving as Visiting Professor, also includes a commitment of servicing local shelters for migrants in transit and deportees. Currently creating joint project that would allow an exchange program of Loyola and ITESO students engaging in binational immigrant rights advocacy.

California Department of Justice, Calgang Database Technical Advisory Board, Sacramento

California Advisory Board Member

March 2018- Present

Appointed by Former California State Senator Kevin De Leon to serve as the advisory board member with immigration expertise. Responsibilities include overseeing and drafting regulations for the California Department of Justice regarding all shared gang databases in California.

Homeboy Industries, Los Angeles, California

Law Clerk for Criminal Defense Attorney Eleanor Miller

Fall 2010- Fall 2012

Developed an Immigration and Criminality Project in conjunction with Dolores Mission, Loyola’s Immigration Law Society and the Mexican American Bar Association. Created workshops to educate clients regarding rights, options for immigration relief and immigration bars. Conducted immigration intake and prepared affirmative adjustment of status applications under the guidance of MABA immigration attorneys.

Public Counsel Law Center, Los Angeles, California

Law Clerk for Immigrants’ Rights Project

Summer 2011, Spring 2102

Completed U-Visa, Adjustment of Status, Visa Extensions, Temporary Protected Status applications and SIJS motions. Worked directly with clients, completed declarations and conducted intake at the Santa Ana Detention Center.

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Los Angeles, California

Law Clerk for the National Security and Immigrants’ Rights Project

Spring 2011

Researched constitutional issues regarding prolonged detention, treatment of incapacitated immigrant detainees, and the CDCR’s visitation policy; drafted memoranda, served as a court observer, conducted intakes and completed declarations.

Kids In Need of Defense (KIND), Los Angeles, California

Law Clerk for Probono Coordinators Lindsay Lang & Gladis Molina

Summer 2010

Conducted intakes and identified forms of immigration relief for clients. Worked with coordinators to place cases and assisted pro bono attorneys in completing Asylum and SIJS applications.

USC Immigration Clinic, Los Angeles, California*Intern for Niels Frenzen, USC Gould School of Law*

Summer 2007-Spring 2009

Conducted client intakes and worked on asylum, Violence Against Women Act applications, work permits, and residency petitions. Provided assistance as a translator and interpreter for law students. Researched the growth of gangs in Central America and effect of migration to support asylum cases. Visited detention centers in San Pedro and Lancaster, CA and Pearsall, TX assisting with translation and preparing clients for hearings.

National Immigration Law Center (NILC), Los Angeles, California*Intern for the Immigrant Labor Division*

Summer 2006

Worked with Attorney Karen Tumlin to gather information regarding the Hoffman Plastics Supreme Court case; wrote articles for the NILC monthly newsletter.

EDUCATION**Loyola Law School, Los Angeles***Juris Doctor Recipient, May 2012*

Honors: Loyola Law School Public Interest Scholar, Mexican American Bar Foundation Scholar, Latina Lawyers Bar Association Scholarship Recipient, A+ in Immigration Law

University of Southern California, Los Angeles*Bachelor of Art in International Relations & Spanish with Honors, Spring 2009*

Honors: *Cum Laude*, Blue Key Honor Society, USC Order of Troy Senior Recognition, USC College of Letters, Arts and Science Dean's list (Fall 2007- Spring 2009), USC Mexican American Alumni Scholarship

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS*Hispanic National Bar Association, Top Lawyers Under 40, 2019**American Bar Foundation Fellow, 2018**American Bar Association, On the Rise, Top 40 Young Lawyers, 2017**Loyola Law School Post-Graduate Public Interest Fellow, 2012***PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND ACTIVITIES:** Mexican American Bar Association (0-5 Trustee 2018-2019),

American Immigration Lawyers Association (Law Student Liaison 2016-2017), American Bar Association, Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA Latina Commissioner 2017-2020) Faculty Supervisor for La Raza de Loyola, Los Angeles VAWA Network (2012-Present)

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

Universidad de Guanajuato Jornadas Sobre El Derecho del Asilo, *Realidades de La Frontera y el Derecho del Asilo en los EEUU*, Guajuato, Guanajuato, June 29th, 2023.

1st Annual Chicano Fest hosted by the Universidad de Guadalajara and the ITESO, *Tacticas Colectivas Para La Resistencia, Integracion, Inclusion y Exclusion*, Guadalajara, Jalisco, May 4th, 2023.

The American Association of Law School's Clinical Conference, *Building a Praxis of Hope as Resistance and Wellness*, San Francisco, California, April 30th, 2023.

Trauma Informed Los Angeles, *Sexual Assault Awareness*, Los Angeles (Online), April 12, 2023.

SALT, *Critical Love Theory of Rest and Resistance*, Chicago, Illinois, October 14th, 2023.

Self Help Graphics and We Rise Art Exhibition, *Donut (W)hole and a Conversation on Asylum and Refugees*, Los Angeles, California, May 14th, 2022.

Tecnologico de Monterrey- Guadalajara Campus, *Seminario sobre Personas Migrantes y Refugiadas: Perspectiva, vivencia y retos en el Occidente de Mexico*, Guadalajara, Mexico, April 4th, 2022.

Los Angeles Civil and Human Rights and Equity Department, *Employment Rights and Justice for Workers*, Los Angeles (Online), California, October 28th, 2021.

The American Association of Law School's Clinical Conference, *Lawyering Over the Line*, Los Angeles (Online), California, April 30th, 2021.

J. Ruben Clark Law Society Primer Congreso Latino Americano De Probono, *Modelos De Atencion Juridica Para Personas Migrantes y Refugiadas*, Mexico City, Mexico November 21, 2020.

IBERO-Tijuana Coloquio Etica y Teologia Desde Las Fronteras, *Experiencias Fronterizas*, Tijuana, Mexico, October 23, 2020.

LatCrit Biennial Conference, *Teaching Critical Legal Theory in Border Service Experiences in the US and Mexico*, Atlanta, Georgia, October 18th, 2019.

2019 Gang Prevention & Intervention Conference, *Guilty Until Proven Innocent: Gang Databases and their Collateral Consequences*, Long Beach, California, May 14th, 2019.

American Association of Law School's Clinical Conference, *Gumming Up The Wheels of Injustice*, San Francisco, California, May 6th, 2019.

4th Annual National Professors of Color Conference, *Taking Back Our Narrative-A Clinical Approach*, Washington DC, March 23rd, 2019.

Guilty by Association II: Moving Beyond the Police Gang Narrative, *Immigration Consequences of Gang Allegations*, Los Angeles, California, February 1st, 2019.

Mexican American Bar Association, *But I'm an Immigrant Too: Addressing Latino-Attorney Biases in Serving the Immigrant Community*, Los Angeles, California, January 26th, 2019.

Western Law Professors of Color and CALPALF, *Immigration Policy and The Role of The Courts*, Las Vegas, Nevada, October 18th, 2018.

American Constitutional Society and The Mexican American Bar Association, *Seeking Reunification: Separation of Immigrant Children in Los Angeles*, Los Angeles, California, August 1st, 2018.

Drexel University, Immigration Law Scholars and Teacher's Workshop 2018, *Responding to Urgency and Emergency Under The Trump Administration*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, May 24th, 2018.

Ignatian Solidarity Network, Solidarity on Tap, *Walking Together Toward a Just, Hospitable World*, Los Angeles, California, April 17th, 2018.

Universidad Centro Americana José Simeón Cañas, Seminario Regional De Migraciones Nuevas Formas De Habitar El Mundo: Dignidad más allá de los Muros, *De Niño al Pandillero: La Criminalización y Deportación de Migrantes en Los EEUU*, San Salvador, El Salvador, April 12th, 2018.

Latin American Refugee Fund, *Voces Inocentes*, San Miguel De Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico, March 3rd, 2018.

XVI Encuentro Red Jesuita Con Migrantes Centro America Y Norte America, *Un Modelo De Atención a Migrantes y Refugiados en Estados Unidos*, Mexico City, Mexico, October 10th, 2017.

The National LGBT Bar and Hispanic National Bar Association, *"DACA and Our Communities: What You Need to Know,"* Los Angeles, California, September 21st, 2017.

The Hispanic National Bar Association, 42nd Annual Convention, *Stand Up, Fight Back! Advocating For Vulnerable Immigrant Populations Through Community Lawyering Under a Trump Administration*, Kansas City, Missouri, September 7th, 2017.

The Association of American Law School's, 40th Annual Conference on Clinical Legal Education, *Under Pressure: The Art of Positivity and Reinvention in Turbulent Times*, Denver, Colorado, May 6th, 2017.

The California Endowment, Global Homeboy Network, *Legal Realness in Re-Entry: Lesson #1 Cross Cultural Competency*, Los Angeles, California, August 8th, 2016.

Los Angeles Trade Technical College, Mujeres Empowered for Success the 1st Annual Latina Conference in the New 9th, *Panel Discussion on Immigration*, Los Angeles, California, May 14, 2016.

The Wellness Center-Los Angeles, Nuestrxs Voces: Voces de Equidad, *Let's talk about Health, Baby: Undocumented and Uninsured*, Los Angeles, California, February 27, 2016.

University of Southern California, USC Rossier School of Education: Jumpstart Children First, *The Immigrant Experience in Education*, Los Angeles, California, February 20, 2016.

Human Rights First, Crisis of Counsel: Redoubling Efforts to Address Representation Gaps Facing Immigrants, *Representation and Vulnerable Population- Gaps and Opportunities*, Los Angeles, California, September 12, 2014.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2016 Emil Gumpert Award: *Loyola Immigrant Justice Clinic Fueled by Ganas*, The American College of Trial Lawyer Journal, (Spring 2017) (Published Speech).

6 steps immigrants can take to prepare for the future, San Francisco Chronicle (January 26th, 2017)(Co-Author).

Law Would Shine A Light on Gang Lists, Los Angeles Daily Journal (May 31st, 2016) (Co-Author).

SELECTED MEDIA APPERANCES

The Reality of DACA and Immigration, The Stranger Fruit Podcast, (April 9th, 2023).

The Anti-Immigrant Epidemic in the US, The Stranger Fruit Podcast, (March 26th, 2023).

Biden's Immigration Reform Bill Could Change Everything...Or Not Pass at All. Here's What You Need to Know, LAist, (February 20th, 2021.)

Biden and Democrats Take First Official Step Towards Immigration Reform, NPR/KPCC Take Two, (February 18th, 2021.)

Marissa Montes- Professor and Immigration Attorney, Ellas Podcast, (November 30th, 2019.)

Acuerdo migratorio fuerza al migrante a buscar asilo en Mexico en lugar de EU, Primera Emision de Enfoque Noticias, (July 14th, 2019.)

He grew up in West Africa. He never heard of MS-13. Then he fled to the US-and ICE accused him of being a gang member, Yahoo News, (January 21st, 2019.)

The President Threatens Birthright Citizenship, KPCC-FM Take Two, (October 30th, 2018.)

Guest Appearance- Marissa Montes Vizcarra discussing activism in her community, El Aviso- El Show de Gustavo Vargas, (July 30th, 2018.)

Immigration Policy Update, KPFF/KPCC Travel Tips for Aztlan, (June 23rd, 2018).

Fraught debate among Dreamers: Give Trump his wall?, The San Francisco Chronicle,(January 26th, 2018).

Amid Stalemate, 'Dreamers' put in applications and cross fingers, The San Francisco Chronicle, (January 21st,2018).

DACA recipients eager to act after ruling, but quick resolution unlikely, The San Francisco Chronicle, (January 10,2018).

Immigration Advocates Warn Undocumented Are "Fair Game" After Detention of Texas Child, The American Prospect (November 2nd, 2017).

'Dreamers' Seek DACA Extension, KNBC-TV, (September 16th, 2017).

Crean En Los Angeles un foro de ayuda a los dreamers, Telemundo-LA, (September 16th, 2017).

Law Clinic to Help DACA Recipients, KCAL-TV & KCBS-TV, (September 16th, 2017).

Programa De Accion Diferida Apoya Sonadores, Univision, (September 16th, 2017).

Thousands of 'Dreamers' face agonizing choices about their children, San Francisco Chronicle, (September 9th, 2017).

Reopening of Previously-Closed Deportation cases Has Dramatically Spiked In L.A. Since January, LAist (July 18th, 2017).

Sacramento Report: Calgang Reforms Move Froward, But There's Competition, Voice of San Diego (April 21, 2017).

Could All Undocumented Immigrant Be Deported?, Telemundo (February 22nd, 2017).

California Could Become a Sanctuary State. Here's What You Need to Know, Desert Sun (February 10th, 2017).

Garcetti Announces \$10 Million Legal Defense Fund For Immigrants Facing Deportation In Trump's America, LAist (December 19th, 2016).

Inmigrantes Se Apresuran A Naturalizarse Tras Victoria De Trump, CNN en Español (December 10th, 2016).

As an incoming president promises deportation, Los Angeles officials promise resistance, America Magazine (November 18th, 2016).

Students and Faculty Rally to Designate USC As a 'Sanctuary' Campus, LAist (November 16th, 2016).

Here's What You Need To Know If You Are Undocumented in L.A., LAist (November 14th, 2016).

Trump's victory jolts Bay Area minority communities, San Francisco Chronicle (November 12th, 2016).

California and Trump are on a collision course over immigrants here illegally, Los Angeles Times (November 11th, 2016).

U.S. citizenship applications rising amid fears of Trump, San Francisco Chronicle (September 30th, 2016).

Finally, former gangsters have a chance to set the record straight, KPCC (October 3rd, 2016).

Deadlocked Supreme Court Fails to Revive Obama's Immigration Plan, Morning Edition on National Public Radio (June 24th, 2016).

'Este proceso es difícil, pero también hay sanación, dice víctima de violencia doméstica, La Opinion (June 17th, 2016).

Immigrant Clinic Looks to Clear Confusion to Undocumented Community, NBC4 News (February 19th, 2015).

LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

Expert Testimony, California State Senate Public Safety Committee, Sacramento, CA (April 2017).

ADMISSIONS: State Bar of California

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: *Language: fluent Spanish*