

FACULTY BIOS

Rene Valladares is the Federal Public Defender for the District of Nevada. He is an adjunct professor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Boyd School of Law, and the UNLV Criminal Justice Department. He lectures nationally on various criminal law and procedure topics including evidence and the defense of conspiracy cases. Mr. Valladares serves on the Federal Defenders' Performance Measurement Working Group. Recently, Rene Valladares wrote a Defender's Guide to Federal Evidence: A Trial Practice Handbook for Criminal Defense Attorneys, published by NACDL.

Desiree Lassiter received her Bachelor of Science degree in chemical engineering from MIT and wrote an undergraduate thesis on the chemical vapor deposition of thin films. While studying at MIT, Desiree was employed by MIT's tutorial services room as a chemistry tutor and served as a chemistry teaching assistant for MIT's project interphase. Desiree was also awarded MIT's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership award for her work within the Latino community and her commitment to uniting underrepresented communities across MIT's campus. Following her time at MIT, Desiree continued her studies in chemical engineering at the University of California, Los Angeles. At UCLA, she was awarded the Eugene V. Cota-Robles Fellowship, received a Master of Science degree in chemical engineering, and wrote her thesis on the plasma etching of thin films using chlorine-based plasmas. Desiree served as a teaching assistant for a semiconductor processing course and supported UCLA's Center for Excellence in Engineering and Diversity, where she taught and tutored underrepresented engineering students in their undergraduate chemistry courses.

Desiree went on to earn her J.D. from the University of California, Berkeley School of Law. During the pursuit of her law degree, Desiree made the difficult decision to transition away from the world of engineering and become a public defender. Her decision was based in part on her family's personal experience within the criminal justice system and her work in Berkeley's Death Penalty Clinic. After law school, Desiree joined the Bronx Defenders and developed her foundation as a public defender. She served the Bronx community for 7 years before moving to Baltimore,

Maryland and joining the Federal Defenders office. Desiree is also a registered patent attorney.

Fritz Scheller is a private attorney with offices in Tampa and Orlando, Florida. After graduating Order of the Coif from the University of California at Berkeley in 1999, Fritz worked as an Assistant Federal Defender in the Middle District of Florida until 2004. Since 2004, Fritz has worked in private practice concentrating on federal criminal defense. Although his practice is primarily focused in the Middle District, he has handled federal cases throughout the country. Fritz's acquittal rate in federal trials is remarkable. Moreover, in the past year, he was part of the successful defense team for Noor Salman in the Pulse Shooting trial in federal court, has had two convictions reversed from the Southern District of Illinois and the Florida 5th DCA, obtained one of the largest downward variances (85% reduction) in the country for a career offender, and has drafted a series of outstanding federal sentencing memos that have resulted in significant downward variances.

Dr. Gary Dale, M.D., Forensic Pathology Specialist, was born and raised in Choteau, Montana, the son of dryland wheat farmers. He received a bachelor's degree from Carroll College, where he met Hi-Liner Jean Greytak, his perpetually patient and loving wife, and a medical degree at St. Louis University. An elective course in death investigation at SLUMS and a rotation at the St Louis Medical Examiner's office drew him to the field. Continued exposure to forensics during a five-year anatomic/clinical pathology residency at Case Western Reserve's Institute of Pathology and Cuyahoga County Coroner's Office sealed the deal. Subspecialty certification by the American Board of Pathology followed a one-year fellowship at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School and Dallas County's uniquely multidisciplinary Institute of Forensic Sciences. In 1990, after less than a year at the Office of the Medical Investigator and University of New Mexico School of Medicine, Gary returned home to serve as the state's medical examiner for 25 years. He has stayed active in forensics by part-time consulting since his retirement.

Rachel Julagay has devoted her career to indigent defense since discovering her passion for this work clerking with the Federal Public Defender, Eastern District of California during law school. After working as an attorney at the Solano County (California) Public Defender's Office for nearly twelve years, Rachel joined the

Federal Defenders of Montana in July 2018. Rachel has tried numerous jury trials and conducted countless court (bench) trials and probable cause hearings in charges ranging from misdemeanors to serious felonies, for both adult and juvenile clients.

James Reavis has worked with the Montana Office of the Public Defender since 2012, first serving as a trial attorney in Butte and then as an appellate attorney in Helena and now Billings. Reavis has resolved 117 appeals before the Montana Supreme Court, with 32 of those appeals resulting in published opinions, including 7 dissents. He has worked on a wide variety of criminal defense topics but has developed a specialty in double jeopardy claims and involuntary commitment appeals. Reavis has previously presented CLE's on DUI litigation, extradition, drafting motions *in limine*, and preserving the record for appeal. Reavis is currently running for a seat in the Montana Legislature.

Fredilyn Sison: Where hasn't Fredi worked? She's been an Assistant Federal Defender in Omaha, Nebraska; Boise, Idaho; Reno, Nevada and Asheville, North Carolina, with side stops in Washington, DC as visiting counsel at the Defender Training Branch and at the U.S. Sentencing Commission. She's in such high demand that she received a recruiting email asking her if she would like to be a legal assistant in an up and coming workers' comp firm. She wrote back thanking them but she was having too much fun being an advocate for poor people and had to decline their lovely offer. Then she killed her LinkedIn account.

An honors grad of Cornell University and New York University School of Law, Fredi has served on the faculty for numerous programs around the country. Her favorite tag line during her teaching sessions is, "You understand this is interactive, right?" To date, no one has successfully slunk down low enough for her to not make eye contact.

Fredi co-authored *Trial in Action: The Persuasive Power of Psychodrama* and expects to be an answer to a trivia question one day because of it. She's written article/chapters on various topics: child pornography, voir dire, cross examination and the effects of incarceration on families. Her two passions are psychodrama (where she's certified as a practitioner, not to be confused with being certified period) and Improv. She will play improv games all day if allowed, and you'll often hear her muttering, "Whoosh, Bang, Pow!"

Dana Hansen Chavis is the Capital Habeas Unit Supervisor at Federal Defender Services of Eastern Tennessee, Inc. Dana represents state and federal capital clients in postconviction proceedings in multiple circuits. She has successfully litigated numerous death penalty cases over the course of her twenty-five year career, including arguing *Harbison v. Bell*, 556 U.S. 180 (2009) (establishing right to federally-appointed counsel for death-sentenced inmates in state clemency proceedings).

Lisa Lunt joined the Training Division of the Defender Services Office in early February 2019 as an Attorney Advisor. Lisa was an Assistant Federal Public Defender (AFPD) in the District of Maryland from 2004-2019, where she carried a diverse felony caseload and served as the Co-Chair of Training for ten years. For five years prior to becoming an AFPD, she practiced primarily white-collar defense in several large law firms in Los Angeles. In 2017, Lisa was lucky enough to live for eight months in New Zealand with her family after receiving an Ian Axford (New Zealand) Fellowship in Public Policy, administered by Fulbright New Zealand. Lisa presented the results of her study around the country and published a paper entitled *Preserving the Dignity of the Mentally Unwell: Therapeutic Opportunities for the Criminal Courts of New Zealand*. Lisa graduated from Loyola of Los Angeles Law School and Yale University.

Eric Henkel was born and raised in Missoula, Montana. After graduating from Sentinel High School, he attended Carroll College where he played basketball. Following college, Eric attended the University of Montana School of Law, graduating with high honors.

While attending law school, Eric received eight separate awards for academic excellence, served as business editor of the Montana Law Review and interned with United States District Judge Donald W. Molloy. Eric is admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of the United States, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, the United States District Courts for the Districts of Montana and North Dakota, the Montana Supreme Court, and Montana State district courts.

In 2020 and 2021, Eric briefed and argued a criminal defense case in front of the United States Supreme Court, leading and working alongside a team of some of the

nation's best criminal defense attorneys. *See United States v. Cooley*, 141 S.Ct. 1638 (2021).

John P. Rhodes has been an Assistant Federal Defender in the Missoula Branch Office since 1996. He was a former CJA panel member and private practitioner (as a specialist in state and federal courts in both criminal and civil litigation) and a former Assistant Public Defender for Missoula County. John has been a guest lecturer at University of Montana (School of Law and undergraduate courses) and presenter on various criminal defense topics for the Administrative Office of U.S. Courts and the United States Sentencing Commission at conferences throughout the United States. John received his Bachelor's degree (summa cum laude) from DePauw University (Greencastle, IN) in 1987 and his Juris Doctorate (cum laude) from Harvard University, Boston, MA, in 1990. He was judicial law clerk to the Honorable Gerald Heaney, United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit, shortly after graduation from law school. John is the organization's Sentencing Guidelines specialist. John collaborates with CJA Supervising Attorney Wendy Holton and Panel Administrator Adina Poitra to generate and coordinate periodic district-wide Panel Training meetings.

Brianna Mircheff is the Appellate Unit Chief at the Federal Public Defender in the Central District of California. Ms. Mircheff attended Loyola Law School as a Public Interest Scholar. After graduation, she clerked for the Honorable Harry Pregerson of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Ms. Mircheff has been with the Federal Public Defender's office since 2006 as a trial attorney, appeals attorney, immigration specialist.

Nancy Groskinsky Schwartz is a Billings defense attorney and member of the Montana Criminal Justice Act Panel. Nancy has been a member of the Montana bar since 1994. She graduated from Eastern Montana College with a bachelors degree in Sociology, and a J.D. from the University of Puget Sound School of Law. She began her legal career working as a volunteer in the juvenile division of the Department of Assigned Counsel in Tacoma, Washington. After a short stint as a prosecutor in Teton County, Idaho, and work as a Montana Assistant Attorney General, Child Protection Unit, Nancy returned to criminal defense in 2001. Her practice focuses on indigent defense and criminal appeals.

LaRonda Renee Martin has more than twenty-five years' experience working as a defense attorney. She is employed as an Assistant Federal Public Defender (AFPD) with the Federal Defenders Office, District of Nevada in Las Vegas. Ms. Martin's prior defender experience includes the District of Puerto Rico, Middle District of Alabama, Western District of Tennessee, and the Atlanta Public Defender's Office. Before moving to Atlanta, she managed, for seven years, her own private law practice and worked three years for the Missouri Public Defender System in St. Louis. Before succumbing to the criminal defense "kool aid," LaRonda Martin served as a bond finance attorney in Manhattan, New York. She has taken more than 100 felony jury trials to a verdict. Best number so far, thirteen, consecutive, felony, not guilty verdicts.

LaRonda created and delivered to various forums, her Street Law presentation in the States of Missouri, Georgia, Florida, and Alabama. She hopes to reach many more youth in the future. Her mantra: "The more we educate today - the less are incarcerated tomorrow."