

## LYNN MARIE MORSKI IS THE DECEMBER 2014 VALEDICTORIAN



Lynn Marie Morski is an extremely accomplished TJS� student. Not only because she is the December 2014 Valedictorian, but because she is also a licensed medical doctor.

Morski graduated from the Saint Louis University School of Medicine in St. Louis, MO, and is graduating with the rest of her class on December 13, 2014 at [Copley Symphony Hall](#) in Downtown, San Diego as the class Valedictorian.

As a part time law student, Morski also works at the Veterans Administration in Mission Valley evaluating patients in the Compensation and Pension department.

Outside of law and medicine, Morski has many additional interests. She studies guitar and Brazilian percussion, is an avid dancer including Bollywood and Salsa dancing, and she trains the Brazilian martial art of Capoeira. "When I decided to go to law school after having just dedicated ten years to my

medical education, I promised myself I wouldn't let it cause me to miss out on enjoying life," Morski explains. "So my experience these past few years was shaped by having to run between patient appointments and capoeira events and music lessons and school. It forced me to keep everything in perspective and to enjoy the journey instead of holding my breath, diving into school, and just waiting to live life until after the bar exam was done."

The December Valedictorian says she learned a lot from Professor Joy Delman while working with her on projects involving law and medicine. "I'm particularly grateful for Professor Delman, whose background is in health-related law, and who has always given me great advice on career paths and connected me with some great opportunities."

Professor Delman says "Lynne Marie is always a delight to have in classes. She

enhances the classroom experience, not just because of her diverse accomplishments, but because she clearly loves the law and law school. It was exciting for me to watch her so successfully tackle this new venture in her life. I am thrilled to have helped play a part in her legal education. I know she will continue to make me and TJS� very proud."

Morski is a graduate of Webster University with a degree in Media Communication. She did her residency at the Mayo Clinic in Scottsdale, Arizona. Morski then did a Sports Medicine Fellowship at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

"After graduation, I plan to continue working at the Veterans Administration as a physician, but I hope to also begin consulting in areas that involve both medicine and law, especially in the realm of health information technology." And she adds, "I promise to take a break from school. At least temporarily..."

## THOMAS JEFFERSON SCHOOL OF LAW RANKS #10 IN THE NATION FOR TOP GRADUATE PROGRAM

Aimed at providing an honest and candid look at graduate programs across the country, [GraduatePrograms.com](http://GraduatePrograms.com) has released its Spring [2014 Law School Rankings](#).

Thomas Jefferson School of Law ranked number ten out of 50 among the nation's graduate programs which puts TJSL above Harvard University and Vanderbilt University.

According to the GraduatePrograms.com website, the program ratings used to calculate the rankings are based on a comprehensive assessment by alumni and current students across fifteen categories including academic competitiveness, career support, education quality, faculty accessibility and support, and student diversity.

Over 70,000 alumni and students participated, from over 1,600 graduate

programs, from September 2012 through September 2014.

Along with TJSL's Juris Doctorate program, many graduates and students praised the school's LL.M. in International Taxation. Currently, TJSL also offers residential LL.M. in American Legal Studies and in International Trade & Investment, as well as multiple online programs focused on giving existing professionals a competitive edge.

## TJSL ALUMS PARTICIPATE IN BUSINESS LAW SOCIETY PANEL

On October 17, The Business Law Society hosted their first panel of the year "What Do Business Lawyers Really Do?" Panelists included Dan Schwender '07 from Foldenauer Law Group, APLC; Charles Field from Chaplin Fitzgerald LLP; Hass Sadeghi '08 of Sadeghi Legal; LacyJ Lodes '08 from Cryptozoic Entertainment; Sabrina Green '02 from Stratton & Green, ALC; and Adam Jay Jaffe '06 from Law Offices of Adam Jay Jaffe.

Throughout the evening, moderator Dominique Mouannes, led discussions with the panelists which included the attorneys' experience in their individual fields of practice along with their daily employment duties, and the differences between working as a solo practitioner and working in a firm. The panelists also gave students insight into how they got to where they are today and what it takes to be a business attorney.



The panelists' fields of practice ranged from business and partnership disputes, securities and intellectual property, and real estate law and business litigation. The diverse experience of the panelists gave students an idea of the dedication and drive it takes to succeed in the business

law world. The evening ended with an open Q&A session with the students and networking with the panelists.

## APPLY NOW FOR THE TJSL BAR STUDY SCHOLARSHIP

Thomas Jefferson School of Law has developed the TJSL Bar Study Scholarship. The scholarship is designed to provide financial support for one or more graduates who will be studying to take the California Bar for the first time. This award will allow the successful applicant(s) to devote more time to bar study. The successful applicant(s) will

need to demonstrate financial need and academic achievement.

The first award will be given after the close of the Fall 2014 semester. Application forms and program descriptions are available on the 6th floor in the reception area. A combined faculty-staff committee will review all applications. The deadline

to apply for the first award is **Friday, November 21, 2014**.

All members of the TJSL community are encouraged to contribute a small amount to this fund by visiting the [Make a Gift](#) website.



## SAN DIEGO LA RAZA LAWYERS ASSOCIATION HONORS TJS� STUDENTS WITH SCHOLARSHIPS



On September 27, the San Diego La Raza Lawyers Association awarded scholarships to law school students who have contributed to the Latino community. During the annual Scholarship Fund Gala dinner held at the Hard Rock Hotel, the Association recognized and awarded Scholarships to TJS� students Raul Maravilla, Patricia Ojeda, Maggie Gaan, and Ricardo Elorza.

The keynote speaker was Edward James Olmos who played major roles in Hollywood movies such as Jaime

Escalante in *Stand and Deliver*, Abraham Quintanilla in *Selena*, and Montoya Santana in *American Me*. Mr. Olmos continues to advocate for Latino communities in pursuit for social justice. He warmly praised the recipients for their hard work and dedication to the Latino community.

When receiving her award, Maggie Gaan told Mr. Olmos, "I want to thank you for all of the work that you do to strengthen the Latino community and I'd like you to know that your legacy will live on

through this next generation to do our part as leaders and young future lawyers in the community to be better and give back. I will do my best to live up to the responsibility and do my part." To which Mr. Olmos responded, "But you already are, you already are."

Patricia Ojeda said she was amazed when she received her award and heard other recipients' stories. "I was glad to see people who love to help students who have been through so much; this shows that they care that we succeed, even though they don't know us."

"Thank you for believing in my story and for giving me an opportunity to continue my legal education," said Ricardo Elorza. "Going to law school and graduating from law school is a privilege that we all have. We should take that privilege to bring good to our communities. San Diego La Raza Lawyers Association has become like a family to me and I hope to continue being part of it."

## NICOLE HEFFEL '13 OPENS BOUTIQUE LAW FIRM



After deciding to pursue a career in wealth management as a financial consultant, Alumna Nicole Heffel '13 reassessed her path after successfully completing her first trial. Since then, Heffel has opened her own boutique law firm specializing in

comprehensive estate planning, personal injury and veteran's benefits.

"Just a few weeks after completing the bar, I accepted a job at AXA Advisors as a Financial Advisor," Heffel said. "I passed

the bar in November, and I was sworn in on December 15, 2013. After almost one month to the day, I got my first call as a lawyer. Someone needed me to represent them. Reluctantly, I took the case. I had decided to go into the wealth management field and was not actively practicing law."

"The case that I took on was a criminal one, and we ended up going to trial in April," Heffel explained. "I was nervous at first, because I had no experience in criminal court. I didn't even know what to say at the arraignment. After the first few stuttering words of my opening argument, I settled in and ran with it.

I absolutely loved being in trial. I had such a rush practicing law." The impact of her trial experience was only strengthened when the verdict came back, "not guilty."

Heffel knew she had found her calling. "I knew what I needed to do," Heffel

said, "I came back to San Diego and gave notice to AXA. I was going to practice law." Heffel hit the ground running and opened her firm at the end of May. "It hasn't always been easy, but it has been far more rewarding than I had ever expected it to be."

A Navy veteran herself, Heffel has used her firm to remain active in the veteran community.

At TJSL, she participated in the Veterans Self -Help Clinic led by Professor Steve Berenson. "The most exciting and rewarding part of my job is the veteran advocacy. I also continue to volunteer at the TJSL Veterans Self-Help Clinic and I continue to ask the Director of the Veterans Legal Assistance Clinic questions about the practice of law and ethics." Heffel said. "Professor Berenson has continued to help shape me as an attorney, even to this day."

"Prior to starting my firm, the highest compliment I ever received was that I

inspired someone to do something great in their life," Heffel said. "After opening my firm, the greatest compliment I have received was when a veteran told me I saved his life. I absolutely love advocating for our veterans and helping them transition from incarceration back into society with a plan in place."

Heffel's interest in estate planning stemmed from her extensive research, for an internship, on Medi-cal, Medicare, and their effect on unplanned estates.

"I realized that without the proper planning and guidance you stand to lose everything you worked so hard to obtain," Heffel said. "I love being in a position to advise people on planning for their future. Estate planning is an invaluable service to offer."

Based on her own experience, Heffel believes new graduates should, "Find what you absolutely love to do and be the best person at doing just that, the money will follow. I would also advise

new lawyers to do pro bono work. I have gotten a majority of my paying clients through referrals from the people I have done pro bono work for."

"All of my memories at TJSL are fond," Heffel stated looking back at her time completing the Juris Doctorate program. "Even now, when I walk on campus I immediately smile because I am proud to be a part of such a supportive and encouraging environment."

Like many first year students, Heffel initially struggled but credits her professors for helping her succeed. "I remember Professor Ilene Durst being extremely patient and helping me when I felt like giving up and Professor Meera Deo listening to my rant about civil procedure," Heffel recalled. "I had such a wonderful time at TJSL that I decided to come back for my LL.M Degree."

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## FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP

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### MARJORIE COHN

#### Radio

Civilian casualties from US drone strikes, RT America News, international cable TV, October 23, 2014.

### MARYBETH HERALD

#### Presentation

*The Science of Credibility: Who Do We Believe and Why*, National Association of Woman Judges, San Diego, California (October 17, 2014)