

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS

Immigration Law Training

January 14, 2016, Pasadena

Panelist Bios

Matt Adams is the legal director for Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP), in Seattle, Washington, where he has worked for the past 17 years. NWIRP provides direct representation to immigrants who have been placed in deportation/removal proceedings, and also represents persons who are applying for legal status and citizenship. Matt focuses on litigation in the federal courts.

Claudia Bernard is the Chief Circuit Mediator for the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals where she leads a staff of seven professional mediators and mediates cases on appeal. Prior to her appointment as Chief Circuit Mediator in 2007, she served as a Ninth Circuit Mediator for eighteen years. She has mediated over three thousand cases. She has taught mediation and negotiation at law schools throughout the U.S. and around the world. She has provided mediation and mediation advocacy training to judges and lawyers in India, Germany, Uganda, and the Pacific Islands; and nationally to judges and lawyers in state and federal courts in California, Arizona, the District of Columbia, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Alaska and Guam; and for lawyers in the U.S. Department of Justice, the California Attorney General's Office, the Federal Judicial Center, the American Bar Association, and the Federal Bar Association. Ms. Bernard co-teaches an annual symposium for international judges and lawyers on designing and implementing court ADR programs, consults on court related ADR programs for the Federal Judicial Center, and is chair of the Federal Judicial Center's Advisory Committee on Executive Education. Ms. Bernard has a keen interest in neuroscience and its application to mediation and has presented on the topic widely, both nationally and internationally. She received the Mediation Society of San Francisco's 2011 Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Field of Mediation, and the Ninth Circuit Mediation Office received the 2014 Robert A Peckham Award for Excellence in Alternative Dispute Resolution. Before coming to the Ninth Circuit, Ms. Bernard practiced civil litigation in San Francisco and clerked for a federal judge.

John Blakeley: A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and Notre Dame Law School, where he also earned an LL.M. in international human rights law, Mr. Blakeley joined the Office of Immigration Litigation at the Department of Justice in 2006. Prior to joining OIL, Mr. Blakeley spent more than seventeen years in government service, first with the U.S. Navy and later with the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. He also operated his own immigration practice in South Bend, Indiana. In 2008, he became a Senior Litigation Counsel, serving most of that time on the Appellate team, where he handled rehearing petitions in the courts of appeals and immigration cases in the Supreme Court. Mr. Blakeley has been serving as Assistant Director since September 2014, managing a team of fifteen attorneys litigating immigration cases in the district courts and the courts of appeals.

Megan Brewer: joined the Law Offices of Stacy Tolchin in March of 2015 and practices exclusively immigration law, specializing in removal defense and complex affirmative applications. Before joining the Law Offices of Stacy Tolchin, Ms. Brewer served as an Asylum Officer with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in Anaheim, CA from 2012 to 2015, where she adjudicated Asylum and NACARA applications and interviewed applicants for Credible Fear and Reasonable Fear. Prior to working at

the Asylum Office, Ms. Brewer was an attorney with Hanlon Law Group, P.C., in Pasadena, CA from 2010 to 2012. Ms. Brewer graduated from the UCLA School of Law with an emphasis in Critical Race Studies in 2009.

Holly Cooper has extensive litigation experience defending the rights of immigrants and is a nationally recognized expert on immigration detention issues and on the immigration consequences of criminal convictions. Ms. Cooper joined the UC Davis law faculty in 2006 and is currently the Associate Director of the Immigration Law Clinic where she focuses on advocating for the rights of detained immigrants. In 2011, she was the recipient of the King Hall Legal Foundation's Outstanding Alumni Award and the Carol Weiss King award from the National Lawyers Guild. Ms. Cooper also trains lawyers on a national level and regularly speaks at academic conferences on appellate and detention issues. In the international domain, Ms. Cooper has worked on human rights issues in Haiti and has volunteered on multiple human rights delegations to Haiti since the earthquake.

Sabrina Damast is the principal attorney at the Law Office of Sabrina Damast in Los Angeles, California. She represents clients in all forms of immigration cases, with a particular focus on appeals, asylum, waivers, and "crimmigration" issues. Sabrina has published articles on asylum, waivers, executive action, and the immigration consequences of criminal convictions. Sabrina also frequently teaches about immigration law topics at CLEs, and trains community volunteers who wish to make contact with immigrant families to provide them with spiritual and moral support during their immigration process. Before entering private practice, Sabrina was a judicial law clerk in the Los Angeles Immigration Court for two years. She is currently a Congressional Advocacy Liaison of the Southern California Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, a member of the National Pro Bono Committee of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, a member of the Executive Committee of the Immigration Section of the Los Angeles County Bar Association, Newsletter Chair of the Young Lawyers Interest Network of the International Law Section of the American Bar Association, and a member of the Steering Committee of the Immigration and Naturalization Committee of the American Bar Association. Sabrina is a member of the State Bars of New York and California and is admitted to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and the United States Supreme Court. When she isn't nerding out over the latest immigration law developments, she enjoys swing dancing with her husband and serves as the leader of a local Girl Scout troop.

Susan Gelmis is the Chief Deputy Clerk for Operations at the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. She has been with the court for over 25 years, starting as a Staff Attorney in 1989. In 1992, she became the Supervising Attorney for the newly established Pro Se Unit, which she helped to define and create. In 1993, she worked with the court and the federal bar to create the Circuit's Pro Bono Program. She then assumed the additional role of Supervising Attorney of the Motions Unit in 2000. As of December 2015, Susan has left the Staff Attorneys' Office to take on her new position in the Clerk's Office. Susan is a 1987 graduate of NYU Law School and originally a native of New York.

Kara Hartzler is currently an appellate attorney at the Federal Defenders of San Diego, Inc. Prior to joining the Federal Defenders, she served as the Legal Director and Criminal Immigration Consultant at the Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project in Arizona, where she specialized in the immigration consequences of criminal convictions. She has authored numerous books, articles, and resources for defense attorneys and served as an adjunct professor at the University of Arizona College of Law. She has also received the David Carliner Public Interest Award and the Robert J. Hooker Award for service to the defender community.

Leon Hazany specializes in United States Immigration Law and is based in Los Angeles, California. As founder of the Firm, he works tirelessly, strategizing creative solutions to the Firm's clients' complicated immigration-related problems. He is a certified immigration law specialist with the State Bar of California, and is a member of the California Bar Association, American Immigration Lawyers Association National Immigration Project, and the Los Angeles County Bar Association Immigration Law Section. Mr. Hazany practices regularly in the courts of appeals and district courts, and is a graduate of University of Southern California School of Law (JD).

Andrew Knapp has successfully represented dozens of noncitizens before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals for the past 15 years. In all of his published Ninth Circuit decisions, his clients have prevailed both before the Ninth Circuit, and, on remand, before the Board of Immigration Appeals and the Immigration Court. Since 2012, Andrew Knapp has been employed as an adjunct professor at Southwestern University School of Law in Los Angeles, where he teaches the school's Ninth Circuit Immigration Appellate Litigation Clinic. In that capacity, he regularly serves, along with his law students, as appointed pro bono counsel for immigration cases assigned via the Ninth Circuit's law school clinic pro bono program. Andrew Knapp also serves as the treasurer and lead volunteer attorney for Immigrant Access to Justice Assistance ("IAJA"), a charitable nonprofit, solely funded by awards of EAJA fees, which provides pro bono representation before the Ninth Circuit to disadvantaged noncitizens who would otherwise go without legal representation. Andrew Knapp's last full-time employment was as a staff attorney for the Board of Immigration Appeals in Falls Church, VA from 2010 to 2011, drafting decisions for three Board member panels. Before that, he practiced immigration law in Los Angeles for over 10 years with Cifuentes Knapp & Associates, and for nearly 4 years in Orange County as a solo practitioner. Prior to that, he worked for the former Immigration and Naturalization Service as an asylum officer in the mid 1990's. Andrew Knapp's reported decisions for last year include the Ninth Circuit's landmark decision in *Dimaya v. Lynch*, 803 F.3d 1110 (9th Cir. 2015) (striking down a criminal deportation statute as unconstitutional,) and the Board of Immigration Appeals' decisions in *Matter of Ordaz*, 26 I&N Dec. 637 (BIA July 24, 2015) (holding that a notice to appear that was served but never resulted in the commencement of removal proceedings does not have "stop-time" effect for purposes of establishing eligibility for cancellation of removal).

Stacy Tolchin established the Law Offices of Stacy Tolchin in 2010 and practices exclusively in immigration law. Ms. Tolchin primarily litigates before the Courts of Appeals and U.S. District Courts, as well as the Board of Immigration Appeals and the immigration courts, and speaks regularly at conferences regarding federal court immigration litigation. Ms. Tolchin is the recipient of the American Immigration Lawyers Association's 2009 Jack Wasserman Award for Excellence in Immigration Litigation, the 2009 American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California Equal Justice Advocacy Award, the 2008 recipient of the National Immigration Law Center Annual Award, a 2007 Recipient of the "Unsung Hero" Award for the National Lawyers Guild of the Bay Area, and was recognized in 2003 by the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee of San Francisco. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the National Immigration Project for the National Lawyers Guild, a member of the Advisory Committee of the Legal Action Center of the American Immigration Council, a member of the Advisory Committee of the Litigation Section of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, and a member of the National Lawyers Guild. Prior to establishing her practice, Ms. Tolchin was an attorney with Van Der Hout, Brigagliano & Nightingale, LLP from 2001 through 2010. Ms. Tolchin is a graduate of University of California at Los Angeles (JD).

Anne M. Voigts is an Assistant United States Attorney in the Northern District of California, working in the Appellate Division. She joined the office after serving as an appellate AUSA in the Central District of California. Before that, Ms. Voigts worked at Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP, handling cases before state and federal appellate courts, as well as the United States and California Supreme Courts. She clerked for the Honorable Stephen Reinhardt on the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and Justice John Paul Stevens on the United States Supreme Court. Ms. Voigts has also taught appellate advocacy at USC law school and criminal procedure at Boalt Hall, and she has published a number of articles on legal issues. Ms. Voigts received her B.A. from Yale University and her J.D. from Columbia University, where she served as Executive Articles Editor of the Columbia Law Review. Prior to becoming a lawyer, she served as a Peace Corps Volunteer for nearly four years in West Africa. She currently serves as the chair of the appellate lawyer representatives and lead editor of the appellate lawyer representatives' practice guide, available at <http://cdn.ca9.uscourts.gov/datastore/uploads/guides/AppellatePracticeGuide.pdf>.

Jonathan Westen has been a Staff Attorney in the Research Unit of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals since 2004. He currently serves as the legal adviser of the Immigration-Asylum group, and for the past nine years Mr. Westen has trained new staff attorneys on immigration issues. Prior to joining the Ninth Circuit, Mr. Westen clerked for U.S. District Court Judge Bruce D. Black in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and subsequently served as a dedicated clerk to Chief U.S. District Court Judge James A. Parker for the espionage trial of Wen Ho Lee. Mr. Westen also spent several years as an associate at Heller Ehrman.