

Criminal Justice Clinic

Alumni Newsletter 2026

Greetings from the Criminal Justice Clinic



Welcome to CJC's first newsletter. Georgetown's Criminal Justice Clinic has shaped the lives of so many, and we thought a newsletter would be a great way for us to keep in touch with our beloved alumni. Read on for updates from our Clinic and community.

Vida Johnson
Professor of Law & Director of CJC

The Year in Review

This year, CJC student attorneys represented close to 40 individuals accused of misdemeanors in DC Superior Court. This was an unusual year to start. With the federal surge in law enforcement that started as the school year began, students were asked to quickly jump into action. While there were no trials, most student cases were dismissed or diverted!

Students also represented six people on motions for compassionate release. Through our compassionate release practice and partnership with Georgetown Medical School's Health Justice Program, we won the release of three long-serving residents of the BOP who have secured their freedom and returned to the community, including one man with a terminal cancer diagnosis.

Two New Staff Join CJC

In the Fall of 2024 **Amanda Rogers** re-joined CJC as a Visiting Professor of Law. Prof. Rogers was the CJC Prettyman Fellow from 2014-2016. After the Fellowship, Amanda joined the Public Defender Service as a trial attorney representing both adults and children charged with serious felonies in D.C. Superior Court. She founded and directed the Caritas Clemency Clinic at Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law, where she and her students represented incarcerated individuals seeking discharge from prison through compassionate release. Amanda is a graduate of Berkeley Law. **Pierce Suen** joined Georgetown Law as a Visiting Professor in Fall 2025 teaching and supervising in the Criminal Justice Clinic and Criminal Defense & Prisoner Advocacy Clinic. Before Georgetown, Pierce spent a decade at the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia as a supervising attorney. Pierce is a graduate of NYU Law, where he was a Root-Tilden-Kern scholar, and the University of Chicago.



Honoring Professor John Copacino's Retirement

Last May, we gathered to celebrate Professor Copacino's impact on the Georgetown Law and Washington, DC, community. Thank you to all of those who attended and shared your warm messages for John. We are forever grateful for his decades of service to this city and his investment in generations of young lawyers.

The Ripple Effect

For over 50 years, Criminal Justice Clinic alumni have used their training to make huge impacts in communities around the country. This year, two of our students are heading to Public Defender offices after graduation, and three students will serve as law clerks for judges across the nation.



Criminal Justice Clinic, Class of 2026

Alumni Spotlight



2025 CJC Alumnus Daniel Matthews (L'25) is now a public defender in Seattle. He said that his time in CJC was impactful to his current work.

“Along with all the other baby lawyers, I took part in a two-week trial skills training, for which, I am happy to report, I was well prepared by CJC.

John Copacino taught us all in CJC that

when it comes to misdemeanors, litigating every possible aspect of a case before making it to trial often results in the best outcomes for clients. I’ve leaned on that philosophy in my practice, churning out motions, making prosecutors decide how hard they really want to work to prosecute my clients, and often winning dismissals. I’m happy to be getting good results for my clients.”

Why I Give



Reuben Goetzl (L'14) currently lives in North Carolina where he works as a Senior Litigation Counsel for BCBS of North Carolina. He has consistently supported the Criminal Justice Clinic

year after year and believes strongly in the work of our Clinic.

“I give to the Georgetown Criminal Justice Clinic because it was one of the most meaningful and transformative experiences of my life. I remain deeply grateful for the mentorship and example of John, Vida, and Lauren, whose guidance shaped not only my development as a lawyer, but also my understanding of what it means to serve others through the law. The lessons I learned in the clinic have stayed with me far longer than anything I learned in any other class—or even in the law firms where I later practiced.

The clinic also gave me a perspective I will never lose and opened my eyes to realities I could not have fully understood otherwise. Seeing firsthand the challenges that so many people face in Anacostia and other parts of Washington, D.C., left a permanent mark on me. It gave me a deeper understanding of how much people carry just to make it through each day, and of how important strong, compassionate representation can be. I give because I want current students to have the same transformative experience I had, and because I want people in D.C. to receive the kind of representation and care they deserve.”

Support CJC Clients and Students

As you can see, CJC continues to provide an influential experience to our current students and makes a lasting impact on alumni such as Daniel and Reuben. When you make a gift to our Clinic, you are continuing a longstanding tradition of supporting our students and our city. Your support has a direct effect on ensuring communities across D.C. have access to exceptional representation.

To make a gift and be among our biggest heroes, please visit give.georgetown.edu/criminal-justice. Thank you!