The new academic year has produced many exciting changes in staff and programs at the Juvenile Justice Clinic. Kris continues to serve as Associate Dean for Clinics, Centers, Institutes, and Experiential Learning, and leads the JJC and the Georgetown Juvenile Justice Initiative (GJJI) in new directions. Wally has returned from his sabbatical and is back in Superior Court as Senior Counsel supervising students in New Referrals hearings and trains Georgetown’s Clinical Fellows. He still monitors Georgetown’s property initiatives while writing his Construction Blog viewable at https://medium.com/construction-notes. Eduardo Ferrer remains with us for another year as a Visiting Professor of Law and Policy Director of the Initiative. Prettyman Fellow Zawadi Baharanyi continues to serve our clients and our students as a supervising attorney. Our former Prettyman, Jessica Gingold, moved to Chicago where she is a Staff Attorney at the Lawndale Christian Legal Center, a community-based holistic criminal defense organization that provides defense for youth and young adults accused of crimes. Lauren Dollar, our former Staff Attorney for the Mid-Atlantic Juvenile Defender Center, has moved on to the Maryland Public Defender, and Erin Keith, our former Juvenile Defense and Policy Fellow moved to the Detroit Justice Center where she is the Staff Attorney for Youth Legal Services and Empowerment. As you can see, we are spreading our message throughout the country. While we continue to mourn the death of Wanda Duarte, Katrecia Banks, formerly the Business Manager at Boys Town, has joined our staff, helping us to maintain the laughter, support, concern, and compassion for our students and our clients that Wanda demonstrated for more than thirty years.

We have expanded the policy projects of the Georgetown Juvenile Justice Initiative as we enter into our fourth full year. Rebba Omer, our new Juvenile Defense and Policy Fellow, now carries out many of our regionally focused efforts. Although many of our programs are funded by the Law Center and by the generous contributions from our alumni, many of our regional...
efforts in 2018 are being funded through a Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, SMART ON JUVENILE JUSTICE: IMPROVING ACCESS TO JUSTICE grant and with funds from other private foundations and contracts. The DOJ grant has enabled us to continue many of our hallmark programs this year, but it will expire in early 2019. The Mid-Atlantic Juvenile Defender Center at Georgetown continues to raise the level of practice among defenders throughout the region by developing resources for juvenile defenders, hosting training seminars for the D.C. Juvenile Trial Practice Group (TPG), and sending newsletters that include juvenile practice tips and case updates from the District of Columbia Court of Appeals.

On the national level, the Clinic and the Initiative, along with our partners at the National Juvenile Defender Center (NJDC) hosted the fifth year of the Juvenile Training Immersion Program (JTIP) Summer Academy, a one-week intensive training program for juvenile defenders. More than forty defenders with various levels of experience came from all over the country to learn from a group of highly skilled trainers, including those from the JJC staff. Several members of the JJC staff also served as faculty at the National Juvenile Defender Center Summit, the only national organization dedicated to improving the work of juvenile defense lawyers. We also welcomed our second class of Rural Ambassadors, a DOJ grant funded program, designed to develop skills and leadership among rural juvenile defenders in the Mid-Atlantic region. In addition to training our Ambassadors, we continue to bring specialized training to other rural defenders through our DOJ grant, most recently in West Virginia. We look forward to training rural defenders in the Western region of Puerto Rico in January!

The grant also enabled us to complete an analysis of the District of Columbia indigent juvenile defense delivery system. A team of expert investigators from across the country conducted interviews in the District and observed our juvenile court proceedings to evaluate access to and the quality of juvenile defense, and to identify points for improvement. NJDC published the report, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: AN ASSESSMENT OF ACCESS TO COUNSEL AND QUALITY JUVENILE DEFENSE COUNSEL, which is available at [http://njdc.info/district-of-columbia-assessment/](http://njdc.info/district-of-columbia-assessment/)

The Georgetown Juvenile Justice Initiative expanded its racial justice focus this year. Olajumoke “Jummy” Obayanju, our new Racial Justice & Juvenile Defense Fellow, works with the GJJI and JJC staff to improve systems serving youth by advancing policy reform and developing resources to help juvenile defenders incorporate racial justice arguments into their youth advocacy. We are partnering with the National Juvenile Defender Center to develop a racial justice toolkit to provide juvenile defenders with data, empirical research, sample pleadings, and other resources to use in their state and local courts. Kris continues to train juvenile defenders across the country on implicit racial bias and the intersection of race and adolescence in the Fourth Amendment and the other legal doctrines. GJJI also expects to launch a pilot program for defenders of color, particularly those interested in challenging racial injustice in the juvenile justice system. We hope this initiative will encourage participants to pursue careers in juvenile defense, and provide support and mentoring to these defenders once they enter the profession. Our newly created fellowship provides us with the opportunity to expand our racial justice advocacy, assisting youth of color in the justice system who face significant hurdles to success and improving their chances of becoming productive citizens.

The Clinic and the Initiative continue to be leaders in local policy work designed to shrink and improve the District of Columbia’s juvenile and criminal justice systems. In March
2018, the Initiative and its co-authors, Rights4Girls, published the report BEYOND THE WALLS: A LOOK AT GIRLS IN D.C.’S JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM. The findings of the report highlight the increasing criminalization of girls of color that has taken place in the District over the last ten years. The Initiative also actively shaped and supported two important pieces of legislation that were enacted by the Council of the District of Columbia. One legislative initiative – the Student Fair Access to School Act of 2017 – fundamentally overhauls the District’s approach to the school discipline. The law replaces the exclusionary policies and practices used in the past with a more holistic, restorative approach to discipline to ensure that D.C. youth are in school every day. The other legislative initiative amended the Youth Rehabilitation Act by expanding the number of rehabilitated young adults who are eligible to have their convictions set aside. It also requires the Mayor to create a continuum of supports and services for young adults in the system.

To enhance our policy work, and to build upon these reforms and ensure they are implemented, the Initiative recently added two new staff members. André Mansion joined the Initiative as our new Research and Policy Associate. André will expand our capacity to publish reports and conduct original research. Jennifer Ubiera also joined the Initiative staff as an Organizing and Advocacy Associate. Jenn will expand our capacity to engage in community outreach and to elevate the voices of those most affected by the juvenile justice system.

Although we have expanded the staff and activities of GJJI, educating students and future juvenile defenders remains the Juvenile Justice Clinic’s historic core endeavor. Crime by juveniles continues to decline in D.C. and diversion programs are expanding; but crime still exists in the city and children are still being charged. Our JJC students have already conducted several probable cause hearings and are preparing for trials just as you did when you were a Clinic student. The work remains difficult; but the energy level, the commitment, and enthusiasm of our students and our staff remain high.

Of course, all of this work has a cost. We continue to seek grant funds and Georgetown has been financially supportive of the Clinic and the Initiative. Nonetheless, our non-student related work depends on the support of our alumni. There is a unity among JJC students, fellows, and alums that is uncommon across law school generations. Clinic alumni stay friends for a lifetime, marry each other, support our work, and visit the Clinic office whenever they return to the Law Center. Our bond is strong and that bond is demonstrated constantly by your generosity.

We appreciate the gifts of those of you who continue to fulfill your multi-year pledges. We are grateful for that support and welcome new gifts of that magnitude. But we also cherish any support we receive from our loyal alumni. As we expand our work dramatically, that support becomes even more important. We thank you for that support and for sharing our vision for a fairer juvenile justice system and a school system that better serves the needs of the young people of the District of Columbia and the nation.
As we enter the holiday season, be thankful for those who are closest to you and remember those who need our help.

Sincerely,

Kris

Wally