The BEST Series

BEYOND EXPECTATIONS AND STEREOTYPES

EXPLORING LEGAL CAREERS

This series will introduce you to a diverse group of Santa Barbara County legal professionals. BEST speakers are a combination of the underrepresented groups in the legal field who have similarly diverse backgrounds as Santa Barbara City College students. The panel will share their experiences and offer insight as to how they overcame the same struggles many students face. Through the BEST series we will provide students with practical tools and information to pursue a legal career. Our speakers will instill in students the confidence to overcome stereotypes and barriers to success.

📅 February 8, March 15, April 26
🕒 4.00 PM - 5.00 PM
📍 On Campus: A-211 and Zoom

TO REGISTER:
https://sbcc.edu/careercenter/eventsandworkshops.php
JUDGE VON NGUYEN DEROIAN is a graduate of Allan Hancock College. She graduated from the Santa Barbara College of Law in 2006. Judge Deroian was born in Vietnam. She started her legal career as a Deputy District Attorney in Santa Barbara County where she held several different assignments from 2006 to 2017. She was selected by the Santa Barbara Superior Court Judges to serve as the Family Court Commissioner for the Santa Barbara Superior Court in 2017. In June of 2018, Judge Deroian was appointed to the Santa Barbara Superior Court by former Governor Edmund G. Brown. Currently, she is assigned to a criminal calendar.

ELIZABETH DIAZ is Managing Attorney for the Family Violence Prevention and Immigration Program at the Legal Aid Foundation of Santa Barbara County, in Santa Barbara, focusing her practice primarily on restraining orders and other related family law and civil matters for victims of domestic violence, elder abuse, sexual abuse and Human Trafficking. Elizabeth was born and raised in Santa Barbara; Spanish was her first language. Elizabeth attended Santa Barbara City College, earned her BA in Law and Society at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and her JD from Santa Barbara College of Law. Elizabeth was 2017 Santa Barbara Women Lawyers Attorney of the Year and Santa Barbara County Bar Association President, 2020 – 2021.

RET. JUDGE GEORGE ESKIN earned his undergraduate degree from UCLA and his law degree from the UCLA School of Law. He has served as an Assistant District Attorney in Santa Barbara County and Ventura County, and he was the Chief Assistant City Attorney in Los Angeles. Judge Eskin was appointed to the bench in 2003 and retired in 2013. Prior to his appointment, Judge Eskin was a member of the California Commission on Personal Privacy, the California Judicial Nominees Evaluation (JNE) Commission and the Santa Barbara County Human Services Commission. He served on the Executive Committee of the Anti-Defamation League, Santa Barbara chapter and as Chair of its Civil Rights Committee; the Board of the Santa Barbara Jewish Federation and Chair of its Jewish Community Relations Council; and, the boards of Girls Inc. of Greater Santa Barbara and Santa Barbara's Shelter Services for Women. He has been the public address announcer for the UCSB Women’s Basketball Team for the past 28 years.

JESS McHARRIE is a gender queer, bow-tie wearing, Ru-Paul loving Deputy Public Defender who has come a long way since being raised by their grandparents in Blackpool, England. Jess knows the struggle of being viewed as “different” in a world that’s constantly trying to change you to fit into the cookie cutter norms of societal expectations. Jess received their Master’s in American Studies from Edinburgh University, and an Associates in Paralegal Studies from Suffolk Community College in Long Island, NY before migrating west to attend California Western School of Law in San Diego, California to get their J.D. Jess worked in private criminal defense in San Diego before first becoming a Deputy Public Defender in Riverside, CA and then transferring to the Santa Barbara Public Defender’s Office. And, after 13 years of traversing the insanity that is the American immigration system Jess finally became a U.S. Citizen a couple of years ago!

TONY TOLBERT is the Assistant Director of Admissions for UCLA School of Law. Previously, he co-directed UCLA’s Law Fellows Program diversity pipeline initiative. He also teaches the Street Law clinic through which students teach law-related topics in local high schools. He received his B.A. in Political Science from U.C. Santa Barbara and earned his J.D. from Harvard Law School. Prior to working at UCLA, Tony practiced law in the music and sports industries. He enjoys counseling students on the law school application process and coaching youth basketball.

JACKIE GARDINA received her BA degree in political science from the University of Iowa and her Master’s in Social Work from Boston University. She graduated magna cum laude from Boston College Law School. Upon graduation, she clerked for Chief Judge William Young of the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts and then for the Honorable Levin Campbell of the First Circuit Court of Appeals. Before becoming Dean of the Santa Barbara and Ventura Colleges of Law (COL), Dean Gardina was a Professor of Law at Vermont Law School (VLS) where she also served as the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. In addition to her teaching duties and administrative work, she has spoken and written on a variety of topics, including the Solomon Amendment, the “don’t ask, don’t tell” law, and the intersection of the Defense of Marriage Act and the bankruptcy code. She has published commentary on issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community in the Washington Post and the Huffington Post. Dean Gardina is the Chair of State Bar Accredited and Registered Law Schools, a member of the California Attorney Practice Analysis Working Group, and a Commissioner of the Ventura Port District.