Gailor Family Law Litigation Clinic

Dean Leonard & Ms. Gailor,

 I wanted to provide an update and overview of the impact that has been made by the Gailor Family Law Litigation Clinic following the conclusion of the 2021-2022 Academic Year. However, to begin, I want to express my fullest gratitude and appreciation for the opportunity you presented me with and the chance you took on me. This past year has been one of the most personally fulfilling experiences I have had, and I believe it is something that has been shared by the students who have done the heavy-lifting for the Clinic. None of this would be possible if not for the generosity, encouragement, support, and guidance of you both.

 The Clinic officially opened and took on its first client in August of 2021. In the nine months since, we have opened a total of 105 cases, all for indigent and needy individuals in Wake County, many of whom would have otherwise been unrepresented. Of those 105, 70 of those files have been closed and the remaining 35 are still open and are being carried over through the upcoming summer term and potentially into the fall semester of Academic Year 2022-2023. In addition, the Clinic currently has a waitlist of more than 40 individuals who are seeking legal representation. Several of those waitlisted prospective individuals will have files opened and become clients during the summer term that starts in late May. Additionally, the Clinic has fielded hundreds of additional inquiries and provided either referrals or legal advice over the phone.

 During both the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters, the Clinic had a full enrollment of ten students each for a total of twenty students who enrolled in the Clinic. The students were a mix of second-year and third-year law students, many of whom had a direct and specific interest in practicing family law following graduation. Three of those twenty students also completed a separate and additional independent study through the Clinic which provided them the opportunity to receive academic credit for additional hours working in the Clinic and taking on more complex cases. The Clinic will be operating and offered during the Summer 2022 term and has five students currently registered. They will be picking up where the prior students left off with the pending cases and taking new cases as well.

 The students who have taken the Clinic have been able to gain an experience that is unmatched by anything that I experienced during my time as a student at Campbell. Every student has been assigned multiple cases and interacted with multiple clients. Each student has had the opportunity to conduct an initial consultation on their own and been able to communicate and build rapport with their clients. Each student has drafted legal documents, completed court forms, and learned where and how to file those with the clerk of court. These are the skills necessary to practice law yet not something that can be taught from a textbook in a classroom.

 More importantly, every student who has been enrolled in the Clinic has been in a courtroom, interacted with court staff, attorneys, and judges, and has both witnessed and been a part of the actual administration of justice and the law. Many of these interactions have led to job interviews and opportunities for the students. Since August, the Clinic and the students have made over eighty court appearances and have appeared in the courtrooms of eleven Wake County District Court Judges. The judges have welcomed them with open arms and privately provided glowing feedback about their performances. The education and training they are receiving through Campbell Law School are not only preparing them well but molding them into exemplary attorneys that will represent Campbell and its reputation. The students’ work has resulted in approximately sixty-two orders being entered, ranging from custody and child support to spousal support and procedural orders, in addition to seven domestic violence protective orders. The Clinic has conducted thirty-seven hearings since August, several of which have been contested and against opposing counsel. At no point have any of the students shied away from any of the opportunities presented but have met the moment. They have made the Clinic, and hopefully Campbell, very proud.

 As much benefit as the students have received from this Clinic, its most important impact has been on the lives of the clients we have been graced with the opportunity to serve. Overwhelmingly, the Clinic has been able to positively impact the community and individual lives by providing services to those who are least able to afford it but most desperately need it. I have included some of the feedback we’ve gotten from those clients in their case closure surveys.

This gratitude has been directly witnessed by the students and they have seen first-hand why the practice of law is a calling and the true meaning of Christian service. Their experiences in the Clinic will be a memory that I sincerely believe will be lasting. The Clinic is igniting a passion and reminding these students that the only thing required to make a difference and impact in the world is to answer the call that has already been given to them, using skills acquired through their education at Campbell. Hopefully that passion and this Clinic will continue to grow, expand, and create a legacy that carries far beyond, but never loses sight of the fact that each person is more than a case and that everyone, regardless of their financial standing, deserves legal assistance. Thank you for the faith you have shown by giving me this opportunity.

Clinic Quotes

* “I was impressed as to how much care and efforts the attorney expressed… I left the courtroom with relief.”
* “It was a blessing because I was so lost and never been through this in my life. I love how I was told step by step what was going on. I am very happy with the outcome and results, most of all I am very impressed with the respect that my family received.”
* “I truly do not know what I would have done without this Clinic. I was able to get the custody papers I needed to get my grandchildren in my custody and now they are safe. [We] will forever be grateful.”
* “In November 2021, I was in the most difficult conditions of my life. At that time, [the Clinic] generously accepted the representation of my young son's custody case without any financial expectations. My whole life, including my marriage, the house that we lived on it for 8 years and even my son's room and toys and all the memories I had in that house had been destroyed… I cannot describe in words what [the student] did for me and my son in words. They worked seriously and carefully on my case about 6 months, and they gave me a lot of hope and energy every time. After 6 months of pursuit and effort of [the student] eventually the judge gave me my son full custody … After 6 months, finally my son and I experienced a sense of calm and joy… I see the humanity, morality and real help from [the Clinic]. I am so thankful for support and help they have given me and my son. Gailor Family Law Litigation Clinic is a small paradise where angels [the student is] working tirelessly to defend the rights and help people like me and at the end, they win with great power.”
* “My experience with Gailor Family Law Litigation Clinic has been a blessing from the start.  On a day when I was in court alone, [the Clinic] noticed my situation and he took enough of an interest in the fact that I was clearly distressed to approach me and ask how he could help.  From that point on I knew I had someone in my corner who cared and he proved it again and again.  After listening to my story, he fought for my best interest and he did so with class as he always took the high road.  I feel truly thankful to have been represented by a clinic that operates with a clean conscience.  I feel lucky and grateful that at a time in my life when I was so vulnerable and lacked any sort of financial security that I was able to be represented by the Gailor Family Law Clinic.  It’s beyond any doubt that they went above and beyond for my best interest.  During this unsure time in my life [my student] was not only professional but also very understanding.  She helped me keep a better perspective on a negative situation and inspired me to stay positive every time we met.  I feel blessed to have been represented by a team like this.”
* “Anxious, confused and scared for the future of my children I called several law offices. I was sick and broke. I could not afford to hire an attorney. One law office was moved by my story and concerns about my children and refered me to the [the Clinic].  They have given me my sanity back, my confidence has returned and I know that a judge will give me a chance to help mold my children to be responsible adult citizens. I have continued to receive courteous, professional and personal advising that has helped me focus on my well-being, developing myself and my business to be better able to cater to the needs of my children and their future. There is no way to express the relief and peace of mind I gained from the day they told me... "we will represent you; we will take care of this".”
* “[The clinic] made my mother wishes come true & mines. Thank you [student] best lawyers ever. I would recommend to any family in need of help. Thank you”
* “I can only think of the kindness that [the Clinic] has showed my family.... The staff treated my family and I very well they paid great attention to the details and left no stone unturned with regards to my issues... I thank them from the bottom of my heart, the kindness they showed me made me feel like we had known each other forever although we have only met a couple of times so far... I only hope that they can continue to serve the community in the way that they served my family's needs.”
* I am immensely grateful for these words and for all the support received, [the Clinic has] been a light in the midst of my pain, a thousand thanks for being in this stage of happiness for my family