11-23-2004

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Boston College Law School

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Immigration Clinic Wins Important Case

11/23/04--Director of BC Law’s Human Right Program Daniel Kanstroom announced today that the Law School’s Immigration Clinic won an important victory in an asylum case involving a young woman from Latin America. The case was handled by the School's CLINIC (Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.) Fellow, attorney Alexandra Dufresne, and an exceptionally engaged, talented, and dedicated team of law students, including Lauren Fascett, Melania Page, and Matthew Tilghman-Havens.

"Due to the dangers still facing our client and her family, I am unable to include many identifying details about her case,” Kanstroom said. “However, I can tell you that this woman fled to the United States after receiving death threats, and upon her arrival was immediately detained and then held by the immigration authorities for two months in a detention facility."

The young woman was represented by Dufresne and the BC Law students in the Immigration Clinic, who were supervised by--among others--Sarah Ignatius and Kanstroom. The students helped to prepare the case for trial: gathering evidence, finding an expert witness, preparing the young woman to testify, and conducting extensive legal research. Many other students in the BC law program assisted with translation of documents and interpretation at numerous mock hearings at the law school. The hearing itself, though a struggle, ended happily when the Immigration Judge granted asylum in open court.

"Having been granted political asylum, she is now free to live and work without fear, in the United States,” Kanstroom said. "Perhaps one day she will also be able to return home as well."

At BC Law’s Immigration Law Clinic, students work with pro-bono attorneys on political asylum cases in conjunction with the Political Asylum/Immigrant Representation Project (PAIR); interviewing, counseling, and representing clients in INS Detention Facilities and Immigration Court, and working on various types of national and regional “impact” litigation, especially regarding INS detention policies. Students choose the type of work that most interests them and are specially trained and supervised.

To learn more about the Spring Immigration Trip, visit the program's Web site.