

# W.W. CARUTH, JR. CHILD ADVOCACY CLINIC

*November Newsletter*



## NEW PODCAST EPISODES

**Introducing Our Latest Aged Out: The Stories that Built Us® Podcast Episodes Showcasing Ryan Harris and Betty Bajika.**

Meet Ryan, who faced adversity from a young age in foster care. He made a life-changing decision and went on to join the military, earn a psychology degree, and now advocates for those in need.



Meet Betty, whose story is a remarkable journey from the Democratic Republic of Congo to the United States. At seventeen, her father left her and her sister in foster care, but her unwavering faith led her to a loving home. Now in college, studying mechanical engineering and running on the track team, Betty defies stereotypes and shares a message of hope.



**Tune in today to listen to their stories!**

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# 75 YEARS OF CLINIC RECAP

From October 2nd to 5th, we dedicated a week to commemorate and reflect upon 75 years of legal clinics at SMU



Our Chiefs had a great time engaging in conversations with students in the quad, where they discussed their learning experiences and the work they are involved in. They decorated the table with information about our podcast, details about the Child Advocacy Clinic, and pictures of our clinic associates from both this year and the previous year.

The remainder of the 75th-anniversary celebration week was filled with a variety of events, including "Coffee with the Clinics," "Taco Tuesday with Clinic Alumni," "Cookies with the Clinics," and a keynote address by Deborah N. Archer followed with a reception.

## INTRODUCING EXHIBITS

This month, in addition to several other clinic exercises, our clinic associates had the valuable opportunity to practice introducing exhibits in a simulated courtroom setting. Our director, Diane Sumoski, took on the role of the judge for this exercise!



## Long Distance Client Relationships

Our commitment to our clients knows no distance. This semester, two clinic associates have visited their client in rural far East Texas and will soon be heading to Longview to visit with him in his new home. Two other clinic associates made the trip to Houston to see three clients in three separate locations there. Soon, the Director will be heading to St. Louis to visit with yet another child client. Seeing kids in person in their environments matters and builds relationships. Our Clinic is dedicated to ensuring the well-being of our clients and takes the time and effort to literally go the extra mile.

# CELEBRATING TEN YEARS WITH DIANE SUMOSKI

The Child Advocacy Clinic has been incredibly fortunate to have Diane Sumoski as our clinic director for the past decade. For anyone who has had the privilege of conversing with Diane, it becomes evident that the word "passion" barely scratches the surface of her dedication. Her steadfast commitment has been an unwavering source of inspiration to all who have crossed paths with her. Under her guidance, our clinic has flourished, not only in terms of expertise but also in cultivating a community of like-minded individuals dedicated to advocating for children's rights. So, if you will, please join us in celebrating Diane's extraordinary journey with our clinic.



## DIANE'S REFLECTION ON THE LAST TEN YEARS

"The Numbers. I told a group of students during a recent Clinic information session that I have "come of age" as the Child Advocacy Clinic Director – 21 semesters almost under my belt as of this writing! In that time, I have gotten to teach, learn from, and know some 160+ students (most of whom are now lawyers – you?). Those students have zealously represented and closed cases for some 245 wonderful children (a large number of whom are no longer children!!). Our Clinic and Institute has helped train many hundreds of lawyers in child welfare issues. My own learning regarding the interdisciplinary and ever-fascinating field of child welfare law has been exponential and unending. But beyond the numbers, my 10 ½ years in the Clinic have given me a deep appreciation for the resiliency of children, the dedication of aspiring lawyers to those children, and the continued need among families for our services. I'm glad to still be here - not to rack up more numbers - but to continue pursuing our mission to educate lawyers and the community to better the lives of abused and neglected children."