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- Randa Hojaiban, *Deputy Director*
- Margaret Bozek, *Staff Attorney & Program Liaison*
- David Coughlin, *Staff Attorney*
- Victoria Hotham, *Professional Assistant*
- Mary L. Martin, *Staff Attorney*
- Nilda Negrón, *Staff Attorney*
- Alex Puzone, *Staff Attorney*
- Aisha Roche, *Staff Attorney*
- Nicole Silva, *Staff Social Worker*

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THE CHILDREN'S LAW CENTER OF CONNECTICUT

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Clockwise L-R: Alison Mundy, Hon. Barbara Aaron, Otto Iglesias, Esq., Hollis DeAbreu, Esq.

Where Are They Now?



THIS YEAR IS CLC'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY! As we celebrate "30 Years of Brighter Futures" for children and families, we're catching up with staff and board members that helped us make a big difference along the way.

HON. BARBARA AARON was a member of CLC's Gala Committee; she joined the CLC Board of Directors in 2005 and eventually became President in 2013. During her tenure at CLC, Barbara was a partner at the law firm of Berman, Bourns, Aaron & Dembo as a family law attorney. Recognizing the negative impact conflict creates in children's lives, Barbara focused her family law practice on mediation and collaborative divorce, always with a keen eye on the children at the center of the dispute. Barbara is currently a judge

of the Superior Court presiding over juvenile and family cases with intelligence, empathy and understanding. She is a crazy Bruce Springsteen fan and, when she isn't on the bench, you might find her traveling the globe in search of a concert or two.

HOLLIS DEABREU, ESQ. was a vibrant member of the CLC staff from 2005 – 2010, knocking us out with her amazing style and endless compassion. While serving as the Administrative Professional, Hollis always knew her goal was to be a public interest lawyer. Today, Hollis is a Deputy Supervising Immigration Attorney at ECBA Volunteer Lawyers Project, a non-profit that provides quality, free legal services for low income people. But even more than that, Hollis is a

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Where Are They Now?

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loving wife to her supportive husband and an amazing mom to four beautiful children, living the dream in Buffalo, NY!

OTTO IGLESIAS, ESQ. was the first full-time Staff Attorney hired at the Children's LAW Center in 2002! He is still recognized for his passionate representation of children and for always looking so good while doing it. Now living in Rhode Island, Otto still practices law but has also become an author! He recently published the book "*Cuba, your children cry!: !Cuba, tus hijos lloran!*", a love letter to his Cuban parents and heritage which earned "Distinguished Favorite" at the 2023 Independent Press Awards and was a finalist at the Next Generation Indie Book Awards.

RHONDA MORRA was the first paid Staff Attorney at CLC, starting in 1999. She maintained a private practice while dedicating half her professional time to CLC's child clients. After leaving CLC, she continued her practice for many years dedicated to protecting children from the effects of their parents' conflict. Rhonda now focuses her efforts on supporting survivors of domestic violence, including children, as the Director of Legal Advocacy at Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV). Anyone who knows Rhonda knows her knowledge of and love for the New York Yankees, especially Donnie Baseball, number 23, Don Mattingly. If you need a baseball expert on your trivia team, give her a call!

ALISON MUNDY served as the Director of Development from 2009 to 2013 and helped bring the Children's LAW Center into a new era of fundraising. Cutting her teeth in legislative advocacy, Alison established relationships that are still going strong today. Alas, Alison's heart was always West Coast and she is now the Senior Director of Development at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, which has more than 18,000 works of art in its permanent collection. Also a mom, grand-mom, and dog-mom, Alison is always on a foodie adventure. If you want a particular kind of strawberry that is native to Laos and only sold at one stand in the wilds of California, Alison can bring you there. ♥



The Children's Law Center is excited to announce our fundraising partnership with the 2023 Travelers Championship Birdies for Charity program!

Once again, the Travelers Championship will donate 100% of your gift to our organization, PLUS provide an additional 15% bonus match on every dollar raised!

This year is CLC's 30th Anniversary! Your donation will enable us to continue the vital work of protecting children and strengthening families in crisis. We appreciate your support, as it is crucial to our success. Thank you.

How to Donate Through Birdies for Charity:

- Visit our website at www.clcct.org and click on the Birdies for Charity image on the home page.
- If you would prefer to receive a donation form with instructions for mailing a check directly to Travelers Championship that will designate your gift to CLC, please email clc@clcct.org. ♥

Our Staff Social Worker Nicole Silva, LCSW has been tapped to share her knowledge by instructing Sophomores and Juniors seeking their Bachelor of Social Work degree at Springfield College!



In her role at CLC, Nicole collaborates with staff attorneys to help address the myriad of challenges our child clients and their

families face. Taking a holistic approach, it is understood that individual issues and behaviors are influenced by a variety of factors and conditions. How fitting, then, that she will be teaching Human Behavior in the Social Environment, a course that introduces systems theory to up-and-coming students. Congratulations Nicole! ♥

Meet Our New Staff Attorney, Mary Martin

The Children's LAW Center is excited to welcome Attorney Mary L. Martin to the staff. Mary will be the primary attorney covering the Norwich and Putnam courts.

Mary comes to the Children's LAW Center by way of private practice, representing children and families in Child Protection matters. Although she enjoyed working with parents, her passion has always been advocating for children. During her first year of law school, at Vermont Law, Mary interned with the Vermont Judiciary and was able to participate in the Justice for Children's Taskforce. She continued to work for the Judiciary in different capacities, such as with the Guardian Ad Litem Program and Juvenile Court Improvement Program,

throughout and after law school. Upon moving to Connecticut, Mary clerked for the State of Connecticut and then went into private practice. She is thrilled to join The Children's LAW Center and further her advocacy on behalf of children.

"We're very happy to have Mary join the Children's LAW Center staff. Her breadth of experience brings a different perspective to our collective work here and we value that. Not only is Mary obviously committed to working with children and families, she's also a pleasant person to work with, which is huge since collaboration is such a big part of CLC's approach," said Justine Rakich-Kelly, Executive Director.



Mary lives in West Hartford with her family and dog. As a native Texan and graduate of the University of Houston, she is a big Cougar fan! She also enjoys hiking, gardening and exploring New England. ❤️



CLC Receives Support from the Petit Family Foundation

The Children's Law Center is honored by the continued support of The Petit Family Foundation for our Legal Representation Program. This support enables us to continue to serve the state's neediest children in complicated divorce and custody cases. Jim Wasz, Petit Family Foundation Board Member (l) and Dr. William A. Petit, Jr. MD, President of the Petit Family Foundation (r), presented the check to Randa Hojaiban, Deputy Director (l) and Justine Rakich-Kelly, Executive Director (r) of The Children's LAW Center. ❤️



Save the Date for our 30th Anniversary Gala! Thursday, November 16, 2023

Please join us to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of The Children's LAW Center of Connecticut!

Farmington Gardens
999 Farmington Avenue (Rte. 4), Farmington, CT
5:30PM - 8:30PM

STAY TUNED:

- Look for more information on our website, www.clcct.org, or follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter! @childrenslawct #childrenslawct
- For sponsorship opportunities and auction item donations, please email Gala@clcct.org or call 860-232-9993.

Congratulations to CLC Board Member Rashani Swaby for her HBJ 40 Under Forty Award!



Every year for the last 26 years, Hartford Business Journal, with the help of independent judges, has selected 40 of the top up-and-coming young professionals who are in leadership positions. For the 2022 awards, HBJ received over 130 nominations. Narrowing down the list to 40 deserving winners was a difficult task. Among them is CLC Board Member Rashani Swabi. Rashani

is a Human Resources Leader at Pratt & Whitney, a Raytheon Technologies Company, where she is responsible for global organizational effectiveness, culture and change management. Here is her HBJ 40 Under Forty story.

What's been your biggest professional accomplishment so far in your career?

Becoming the first director of employee experience for Raytheon Corp., where I get to strategize, lead and partner for a more effective and connected people experience for the corporation's four business units, one of which includes Connecticut's Pratt & Whitney, is my biggest accomplishment so far.

How are you involved in the community?

I serve on the board of directors for organizations focused on children and families, specifically Our Piece of the Pie (OPP) and the CT Children's Law Center. My involvement with OPP is particularly special as I strongly believe it played a strong role on my path to success.

What do you like to do outside of work?

Solve problems! I find pure joy in solving jigsaw puzzles and beating the clock in escape rooms with family and friends.

Why do you deserve to be a 40 Under Forty?

- Lead transformative projects for a Fortune 100 company and a native and graduate of the Hartford Public Schools.
- Was a key player in the enterprise-wide transformation to a remote/hybrid/on-site blended work model at Pratt & Whitney during the pandemic.
- Distributed school supplies with community leaders and organizations to families during the initial uncertainties of COVID-19.
- Actively mentors and coaches early and mid-career professionals with a focus on empowering women and BIPOC to break glass ceilings.

Fun Fact

I purchased my first real-estate property at the age of 21.

Theme Song

"Before I Let Go" (Homecoming version) — Beyonce

What are two "bucket list" things that you would like to achieve before you turn 40?

I want to develop an employee experience platform or intranet that connects the many key moments throughout people's careers. Personally, I want to build my next house from the ground up.

Congratulations, Rashani! ♥

CLC takes part in 2023 Connecticut Bar Association conference.



On June 5, 2023, the Connecticut Bar Association hosted the 2023 Connecticut Legal Conference, the largest annual legal gathering in Connecticut. The Children's LAW Center was a contributor in two of the CLE seminars that were offered. Executive Director, Justine Rakich-Kelly spoke in "Speaking Up for the Voiceless: advocacy and Guardians Ad Litem" and Staff Attorney Alexander Puzone spoke in "What to do When DCF Knocks: How to Address DCF Involvement in Your Family Case". We were honored to be part of such a prominent legal event. Photo: Alexander Puzone and Justine Rakich-Kelly. ♥

Other Ways to Support CLC

MATCHING GIFTS

Many employers encourage giving by offering matching gift options. Ask your employer about this easy way to grow your donation.

BEQUESTS

Consider a legacy gift. For information, contact Justine at Justine@clcct.org



The Children's LAW Center
30 Years of Brighter Futures