

A Case for Caring

BY ELIZABETH HOOVER

In Honduras, an intellectually disabled youngster faced abuse that spiraled into assault and intimidation by a law enforcement officer. The state couldn't protect him, so his family sent the unaccompanied minor to the United States in search of refuge. Resettlement efforts joined the youth with family in western Pennsylvania where he was connected to the University of Pittsburgh's Immigration Law Clinic.

The clinic's law students were equipped to build a case for asylum, but it was painful for the traumatized youth to share his story. A successful asylum case, however, often requires that a refugee relay his or her experiences. The students connected the boy to needed social services. He was able to see a counselor and break his silence. Eventually, with the clinic's help, he was granted asylum and allowed to stay in the United States.

Experiences like these are what the clinic's director, Sheila I. Vélez Martínez, calls "critical pedagogy." "I want the students to engage with the profound ethical components of law and think about the role of law in society," she says. "To protect the client, it's important to look at everything that impacts their life. A lawyer's work is holistic."

Pitt's Immigration Law Clinic was established by Vélez Martínez in 2010 as a training ground for law students and a free resource for immigrants seeking asylum, facing removal from the United States, or seeking protection under the Violence Against Women Act.

It's work that Washington, D.C., attorney and Pitt alumnus Jack Olender believes to be vital. He recently made a gift in support of the clinic's mission in memory of his late wife, creating the Jack and Lovell Olender Professorship of Asylum, Refugee, and Immigration Law.

Olender (A&S '57, LAW '60) is dedicated to promoting opportunity and equal justice—a mission that started in Pittsburgh. "At Pitt, I had excellent professors who led me into good directions. Naturally, I wanted to do what I could for my alma mater," he says.

The gift is advancing the clinic's work, allowing it to serve more clients, particularly those with complex cases like the boy from Honduras. "It gives greater stature and greater visibility to the kind of work we do," says Vélez Martínez, who was named the inaugural Olender Professor.

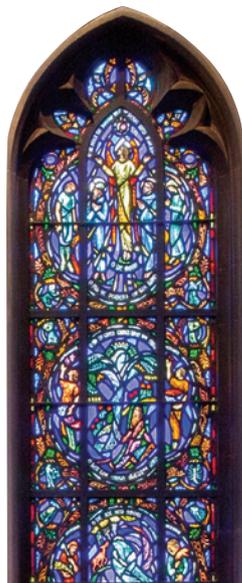
The clinic, she adds, has already successfully obtained asylum and immigration relief for people from more than 50 countries. ■



Vélez Martínez



Olender



Going to the Chapel

The Heinz Memorial Chapel has launched a campaign for a building endowment to ensure that it continues serving the University and Pittsburgh communities for years to come. Donors have the opportunity to associate their names with elements of the historic building, including stained glass windows and chapel pews. Learn more about the Heinz Memorial Chapel Campaign at pi.tt/campustreasure.

Gifts: Boxed

As part of the significant pledge he made to the Department of Economics, **Harvey Steven Cohen** (A&S '68) recently endowed a fund that will support the department's Experimental Economics Lab.

George D. Brightbill (SIS '69) made a \$400,000 bequest to Pitt's new School of Computing and Information and a \$175,000 commitment to establish a scholarship for students pursuing a Master of Library and Information Science degree.

Former Pitt swimmer **Kate Mathison** (SHRS '73, EDUC '80) committed \$10,000 in support of the **Trees Pool renovation campaign**. "Swimming, coaching, and working in athletic administration at Pitt had a significant impact on my life and career," says Mathison, who hopes her gift enriches the lives of future Pitt athletes.

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