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WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION



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Felipe Mendez
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Jamal Whitehead
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Erica Buckley is an associate attorney at Buckley & Associates in the Seattle's International District. Her practice is entirely personal injury litigation. Erica enjoys representing a diverse clientele in trials and arbitrations.

Erica's other passion is volunteer work. She is a member of the Junior League of Seattle where she serves on the Done in a Day Committee and a member of the newly formed Treehouse Young Professionals Board.

Erica graduated with a B.A. in political science from Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts. She graduated from the University of San Diego School of Law in 2007. She is a member of the National Bar Association, the Loren Miller Bar Association, a WSAJ Eagle member, and also admitted in California.





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Hozaiifa Cassubhai is an associate at Yarmuth Wilsdon PLLC, a trial litigation boutique in Seattle. He has represented clients in a variety of business disputes, including securities, employment, intellectual property, shareholder and partnership disagreements, and complex contract/business torts. Hozaiifa also has maintained a robust pro bono practice, including representation of asylum candidates.

Before Yarmuth Wilsdon, Hozaiifa practiced in the commercial litigation department of Davis Wright Tremaine LLP and then clerked for the Honorable Benjamin H. Settle, United States District Court, Western District of Washington. Before law school, Hozaiifa was an associate producer/trial-tracker at Courtroom Television (Court TV) in New York City and then a paralegal at a Washington, DC-based civil rights firm, where he worked on cases in the areas of fair housing, employment and public accommodation discrimination, and post-9/11 racial profiling.

Hozaiifa received a B.A. in history from Boston College and a J.D., magna cum laude, from Seattle University School of Law. In law school, Hozaiifa was a Note and Comment Editor on the Law Review and, at graduation, was named the Class of 2007 Faculty Scholar, selected as the Student Speaker, and elected to the National Order of the Barristers.

Hozaiifa's community engagements include service on the Alumni Board of his law school alma mater. He is the current Vice-President of the Board of Directors of the non-profit Inter*m CDA, and the former President of the Board of Directors of the International District Housing Alliance.

Born in Singapore, Hozaiifa spent his early childhood in Karachi, Pakistan, before moving to New Jersey at the age of 11. Hozaiifa maintains strong allegiance to the New York Yankees, which he recognizes may disqualify him from ever running for public office in Washington State.





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Melissa is an Assistant City Attorney with the Seattle City Attorney's Office. She currently works as the South & Southwest Precinct Liaison Attorney, a position that works between the City Attorney's Office, Seattle Police Department, and community on public safety issues. Her position in the police precincts also affords her the opportunity to provide legal advice and trainings to police officers. Prior to her current position, she was a trial prosecutor with the domestic violence unit.

Prior to her work with the City of Seattle, she worked for the King County Prosecutor's Office—Civil Division, defending the county against class action lawsuits. While in law school, Melissa also interned with the King County Prosecutor's Office in both the civil and criminal divisions.

Melissa is an active member in several volunteer organizations. She is a volunteer attorney at the KCBA Neighborhood Legal Clinic—Chinese Information Services Center that focuses on providing free legal advice to low-income clients who often do not speak English. She also sits on the Seattle University School of Law, Law Alumni Board where she volunteers with the Program Development & Networking Committee. Melissa also volunteers with the Joint Asian Judicial Evaluations Committee, screening local judicial candidates.

Melissa received her B.A. in Humanities with a concentration in Sociology from Seattle University. She received her Juris Doctor from Seattle University School of Law.





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Erin Culver is a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for Clark County in Vancouver, WA. She comes from a military family, but considers Tacoma, WA to be home. She attended Pacific Lutheran University for undergraduate studies, earning a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance and a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish.

Erin received her J.D., cum laude, from Gonzaga University School of Law. While at Gonzaga, she worked in the University Legal Assistance Clinic and served as the president of the law school's gay-straight alliance.

After graduation, Erin began her career at the Spokane County Prosecuting Attorney's office as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney where she worked in the Domestic Violence Unit. Since moving to Clark County in 2007, Erin has worked in the Domestic Violence Prosecution Center, as well as in the District Court, Juvenile and General Felony units.





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John Cummings is a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney at the Pierce County Prosecutor's Office in Tacoma. He graduated from Gonzaga University in 2005 with an English degree and obtained his J.D. Seattle University School of Law in 2008. He began his work at the Pierce County Prosecutor's Office as an intern in the Appeals Unit, joining the Misdemeanor Unit in the summer of 2008. He has recently joined the Identity Theft Unit of the Prosecutor's Office.

John volunteers regularly at Oasis, the LGBTQ Youth Center of Pierce County that provides mentorship, resources, and outreach to LGBTQ youth ages 14 to 24. He was an active community leader and volunteer with Washington United for Marriage, the campaign to Approve Referendum 74 and extend the right to marry to committed same-sex couples. He is honored to have been campaign manager for two judicial candidates, one of whom will be joining the Pierce County Superior Court bench in 2013. He serves as a board member for the Rainbow Center, Pierce County's LGBTQ resource center. Since 2008, John has enjoyed coaching four separate mock trial teams at Seattle University School of Law.

John is originally from Montana, and enjoys hiking, camping, and the outdoors. He attends St. Leo's Catholic Church and participates as a member of the church's LGBTQ faith formation group. He considers himself lucky to have found such a wonderful community - legal and volunteer - in the South Sound.





RaShelle Davis

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RaShelle Davis is a Policy Analyst for the State of Washington Department of Early Learning. Her work is centered on ensuring that all children and families have access to quality early learning programs and child care. She is the Vice Chair of the Board of Directors for Communities in Schools Seattle, a nationwide organization dedicated to improving educational results for economically disadvantaged students. Ms. Davis also serves on the AnBryce Foundation's Advisory Council where she provides recommendations for programs that assist Washington DC youth. She is actively engaged in the local legal community by serving as the Vice President of the Pierce County Minority Bar Association, At-Large Trustee for the Washington Young Lawyers Committee, and Committee Member for the WSBA Committee for Diversity. In 2000, the City of Tacoma recognized Ms. Davis with the City of Destiny Award for her community service work.

In addition to her commitment to education and public service, Ms. Davis is also passionate about international issues. She speaks Chinese and has lived and studied in Taiwan, China, and the Netherlands. She has been recognized for her international studies by receiving the US Department of Education Scholarship for Chinese Studies and the Gilman International Scholarship. She also served as a delegate to China with Stanford University's FACES Program and as a delegate to Morocco with the Center for Women and Democracy.

Ms. Davis received her B.A. from the University of Puget Sound in Business Administration with Honors and her J.D. from New York University School of Law.





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A native of Bulgaria, Delian immigrated to the United States when he was 16 years old and has been self-supporting since. He is fluent in Russian, Bulgarian, and English. His work with the firm of Ewing Anderson, P.S. in Spokane, Washington, began with a quest to become a US Citizen and he is well down that road.

Delian graduated Summa Cum Laude from Gonzaga University School of Law in 2005. While in law school, he was a member of the Jessup Moot Court Team and an Associate Editor of the Gonzaga International Law Journal. He has continued to be involved with his law school by serving as an adjunct instructor to Gonzaga's Jessup Moot Court Team.

Delian's trial practice includes most civil disputes and law suits, concentrating on commercial and business transactions, claims, disputes and trials; personal injury claims and suits; creditor-debtor relations and bankruptcy; and insurance disputes and claims (with an interest in fire caused losses, claims and trials).

Delian is a member of the Washington State Bar Association, the Idaho State Bar, and the Spokane and Kootenai County Bar Associations. He also is admitted to and practices in federal court, both the Eastern District of Washington and the District of Idaho.

Delian loves to swim, play basketball and tennis, and most of all, he loves to spend time with his beautiful wife Angela (a native of Taiwan) and daughter Anelia. He is not afraid to take tough cases, but he is afraid of spiders. Not a subject he will bring up in court.





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Nolan is Corporate Counsel for TrueBlue, Inc. in Tacoma, WA. TrueBlue is the nation's largest blue collar staffing company. Nolan's areas of practice include all facets of Labor and Employment law. He provides advice, counsel and legal review with respect to all employment matters including employment litigation, terminations, discipline, restructures, layoffs, selection processes, OSHA compliance, wage and hour law, and corporate immigration matters. Prior to his work at TrueBlue, Nolan was the Enforcement Manager at the Seattle Office of Civil Rights where he led a team of attorneys tasked with investigating discrimination complaints, drafted anti-discrimination legislation, and provided training to city staff and community organization.

Nolan serves on the board of the Filipino Lawyers of Washington (FLOW) and has also volunteered to do pro-bono work for the King County Bar Association helping workers recover unpaid wages, the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project representing asylum seekers, and he served as mentor for middle school kids for the non-profit Neighborhood House.

Nolan holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Rhetoric from the University of California, Berkeley and a Jurist Doctorate from the Boston University School of Law.





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Felipe Mendez serves as the Assistant General Counsel for the Tacoma School District No. 10, where his practice focuses on all aspects of the diverse field of School Law this includes special education advice, constitutional issues, governmental compliance, labor and employment, school contracts, and student and teacher rights and discipline. He regularly represents the district in administrative proceedings before the Pierce County Superior Court.

Prior to joining the Tacoma School District, Felipe was an associate at Karr Tuttle Campbell, where he gained broad civil litigation experience related to insurance defense, bodily injury, bankruptcy, receiverships, and commercial cases.

Felipe currently serves as an officer for the Washington Council of School Attorneys (COSA). COSA provides leadership in legal advocacy for public schools by working to improve the practice of school law in Washington State. He is member of the Latina/o Bar Association of Washington (LBAW) and serves on its scholarship foundation which provides scholarships to deserving law students from each of Washington's three law schools. He is also a member of the LBAW Judicial Evaluations Committee (JEC). Felipe volunteers as a mentor for law students, contributes to the Washington State Bar Association Young Lawyers Division Pre Law Student Leadership conference, and previously co-chaired the Ernest I.J. Aguilar Scholarship Committee, the first endowed scholarship at the University of Washington that honors Hispanic MBA students.

Felipe received a Bachelor of Arts from Heritage University in Toppenish, WA; his Masters of Public Administration (MPA) degree from the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington; and his Juris Doctor from Seattle University School of Law.





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Kripa Upadhyay is the founding member and principal attorney at Orbit Law, PLLC, a Seattle, WA, based law firm specializing in all areas of Immigration and Nationality law.

A first generation Immigrant from Nepal, Kripa is passionate about helping Individuals and families pursue their dreams in the United States, and is equally committed to helping businesses recruit foreign talent to foster diversity in the workplace.

Committed to helping Immigrants access resources, Kripa works closely with several Immigrant communities, and organizations serving Immigrant communities. She frequently organizes free seminars and “Know Your Rights” presentations for newly arrived Immigrants and recently re-settled refugees, and was awarded the WSBA’s Community Service Award in 2011 in recognition of her efforts to ensure access to services for low income and linguistically disenfranchised Immigrants.

Kripa currently serves on the Board of the South Asian Bar Association of WA, and as a member of the WSBA’s Committee for Diversity.

Kripa received her undergraduate degree from California State University, Long Beach, and her Juris Doctor degree from Seattle University School of Law .





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Jamal Whitehead is a senior trial attorney with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, where he enforces federal laws making it illegal to discriminate against job applicants and employees because of their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or genetic information.

Before joining the Commission, Jamal was an associate at the private law firm of Garvey Schubert Barer where he practiced in the firm's Commercial Litigation and Labor & Employment practice groups.

Jamal graduated from Seattle University School of Law with a focus in civil advocacy. While in law school, he was a member of the moot court board and was inducted into the Order of the Barristers for his moot court and mock trial competitive achievements.

Jamal has served as an executive board member for the Northwest Defenders Association and the Loren Miller Bar Association, and is currently a planning committee member for the Pacific Coast Labor & Employment Law Conference held annually in Seattle.





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Alma Zuniga is a staff attorney with the Yakima office of the Northwest Justice Project, a statewide legal services organization in Washington State. She practices in the areas of family law and consumer law. She represents low-income victims of domestic violence in custody and protection order cases as well as low-income individuals in cases involving identity theft and charity care.

Alma received an Associate's degree in general studies from Lane County Community College in 2000, a Bachelor's of Science degree in psychology from the University of Oregon in 2002 and a Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Oregon School of Law in 2005.

Alma is an active member of the Washington State Bar Association and American Bar Association. She served a 4-year term as a Trustee of the Washington Young Lawyers Division Trustee Board. Alma served as chair of the 2010-2012 Yakima Pre Law Conference, an annual event geared toward minority and at-risk high school students in the Yakima Valley with the goal to introduce and motivate students about the law and leadership. Alma was recently nominated to serve a 3-year term on the Washington State Interpreter Commission.

