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Amber L. Weeks is a Partner at Noble & Vrapı, P.A., with offices in Albuquerque, NM, Santa Fe, NM, Las Cruces, NM, and El Paso, TX. In addition to handling a broad range of immigration matters and appeals, she specializes in removal defense and post-conviction relief. Ms. Weeks also handles federal litigation and was co-counsel for the first impression mandatory detention challenge in *Melero Valdez v. Terry*, 874 F. Supp. 2d 1262 (D.N.M. 2012). Ms. Weeks currently serves as the New Mexico AILA-ICE Liaison, and she is a member of the AILA Distance Learning and Law Student Outreach Committees.

Annie Banerjee--has been practicing Business Immigration Law, exclusively, for over 20 years. During which time she learned a lot, lived a lot and screamed a lot. She has seen Department of Labor go from paper/mail to electronic. And she has seen CIS go from paper to more paper. She has seen the birth and demise of a ton of Immigration bills, so many that she has lost count. She has 2 cats who counsel her on all important matters.

Andrew Thorley earned his J.D. from the University of Houston Law Center, and has focused his work exclusively on immigration issues for almost 15 years, leading him to recently opening his own practice, Thorley Law, PLLC. Prior to establishing his own firm, he worked in-house at the University of Texas in Austin for over seven years, where he handled immigration issues for various entities within the University of Texas System. Mr. Thorley also spent several years in private immigration practice, where he gained experience with business and family immigration. Mr. Thorley's experience with SEVIS as a Registered Officer gives him unique insights into the issues faced by J-1 exchange visitors and F-1 students, in addition to first-hand knowledge of many policy and procedural matters faced at universities.



A member of the State Bar of Texas and the American Immigration Lawyers Association, Mr. Thorley has given numerous presentations on immigration law to varied audiences on U.S. and global immigration issues.

Beatriz Trillos Ballerini has nearly twenty years of experience in the immigration field. In 2005, she founded the Trillos Ballerini Law Firm in Houston, Texas. Attorney Ballerini has extensive experience in all areas of employment-based immigration. She has presented at the IBA Immigration Law Section and AILA Texas Chapter Conferences. Attorney Ballerini has received numerous recognitions including Super Lawyers Magazine, Texas Super Lawyers (2014 and 2015 Rising Star list). Plus, she was listed as a Top Lawyer by Houstonia magazine in 2015 and 2016. Currently, Attorney Ballerini serves as the Customs Border Liaison for the local Houston Chapter of AILA and a committee member of the AILA National CBP Office of Field Operations Committee. She is licensed to practice by the Supreme Court of Texas, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit and U.S. District Court of the Southern District of Texas. Attorney Ballerini is a Member of the College of the State Bar of Texas, Federal Bar Association, State Bar Immigration and Nationality Law Section and a Charter Member.

Beth Werlin is the Executive Director of the American Immigration Council. The Council, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit, is a powerful voice in promoting laws, policies, and attitudes that honor our proud history as a nation of immigrants. Beth leads the Council's efforts to ensure that everyone has a fair opportunity to present their immigration claims; that the doors remain open to those seeking safety and protection in the United States; and that our laws and policies reflect that immigrants propel our economy by bringing skills, talents, and innovation. Beth previously served as Policy Director from 2015-2016 and in a variety of positions on the Council's legal team from 2001-2015. Over her career, she has worked to protect the rights of noncitizens and to ensure that the immigration agencies are held accountable for violations of the law. She has represented plaintiffs and amicus curiae in immigration litigation in the federal courts and before the Board of Immigration Appeals and is the author of numerous practice advisories. She was NAPIL (Equal Justice Works) fellow and before that was a judicial law clerk at the immigration court in Boston, Massachusetts. Beth earned her J.D. from Boston College Law School and her B.A. from Tufts University.

Brian Wingate is a Foreign Service Officer currently assigned to the U.S. Consulate General in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico as the Deputy Nonimmigrant Visa Chief. He arrived in Mexico in April 2016 and, among other duties, is responsible for the management of the E2 investor visa program. Mr. Wingate's prior foreign assignments with the State Department include Haiti (2011 – 2013), where he principally adjudicated immigrant visas, and Croatia (2013 – 2015), where he was Chief of the American Citizen Service's Unit and Economic Officer. Brian hails from Vancouver, Washington, U.S. – America's Vancouver – he holds a Master of Arts Degree in International Relations, International Law and Diplomacy from St. John's University in Rome, Italy and is a graduate of Washington State University. Mr. Wingate is fluent in Italian to a near native level and has a command of French, Haitian Creole, Croatian, Spanish.

Claire Antonelli has been practicing immigration law in the Rio Grande Valley since 2008, when she joined Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Inc. (TRLA). Claire is a Managing Attorney of TRLA's Immigration



Team. Claire holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of California at Berkeley. She received her J.D. from the University of Michigan. Prior to attending law school, Claire worked for an international human rights organization on the promotion of rights-based responses to human trafficking in the Americas. She also served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Panama.

David Ware has practiced immigration and nationality law since 1982, with a consistent academic focus, is active in AILA, NAFSA, the FBA, and NACUA, and is a frequent speaker and author on immigration topics. He currently serves as Chair of AILA's Healthcare Committee, as well as on AILA's CSC Subcommittee, and the Board of the Federal Bar Assn Immigration Law Section.

Debra Rodriguez has been practicing immigration law for more than 20 years. She graduated Summa Cum Laude from National University in California. She is Board Certified in Immigration and Nationality Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization and is licensed both in California and Texas. Debra is a named partner in Rodriguez & Moretzsohn, P.L.L.C. which focuses solely on all aspects of Immigration law. Ms. Rodriguez is the immediate Past President of the State Bar of Texas, Immigration and Nationality Section. She is a former President of the Corpus Christi Bar Association and former Chair of the Grievance Committee. Debra was voted "Outstanding Young Lawyer of the Year" (ummm, a long time ago) by the Corpus Christi Young Lawyers Association and received the Corpus Christi Bar Association's 2014 "Outstanding Mentor" Award for her work with the High School Mock Trial Teams. In 2014 she was accepted as a Fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation.

Delisa Bressler is a partner with Foster LLP, where she represents clients of all sizes and industries in employment-based U.S. immigration matters. She earned her law degree from the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill and was admitted to the State Bar of Texas in 1998. She was selected by Texas Super Lawyers Rising Stars for five consecutive years and has been published in the North Carolina Journal of International Law and Commercial Regulation, the Texas Lawyer, the Texas Transnational Law Quarterly, Smart Business, Law360, Mobility, and publications of the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

Frances E. Valdez's immigration law experience ranges from removal defense, family and employment immigration to developing and managing community legal service programs. She is a graduate of The University of Texas School of Law and began her career in 2005 as a clinical fellow with the UT Immigration Clinic. In 2007, Frances formed FVALDEZLAW PC a comprehensive immigration law practice in Houston, Texas. Frances also works with United We Dream to build and develop capacity of the immigrant community to protect themselves and their families. Frances has served as AILA Citizenship Day Coordinator for Texas from 2013 to 2016.

Gary Frost practices immigration law exclusively with a concentration on deportation and family based cases. He has represented a diverse group of clients including a Grammy nominated recording artist and an international race car driver. For five years, he served as the American Immigration Lawyers Association liaison to the Dallas Immigration Court. He is a regular speaker at continuing legal education seminars. He is a graduate of the University of North Texas and the University of Tulsa Law School where



he served as the President of the Board of Advocates, a production editor for the Tulsa Law Review and had an article published in the Tulsa Law Review.

Gary J. Ilagan is a Shareholder in the Corporate section of the Houston office of Munsch Hardt. Gary is a highly experienced Immigration lawyer with over 20 years of experience devoted to employment-based and family-based Immigration, I-9 compliance and Naturalization/US Citizenship. He provides innovative Immigration solutions to families and to companies and their employees in the healthcare, oil and gas, engineering, biomedical research, media, information technology, telecommunications, education, industrial services, manufacturing and other industries. Gary is the first Houston-based Immigration attorney for Munsch Hardt, and he serves on the firm's Diversity Committee. Gary currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Asian-American Bar Association of Houston, and he is also the President of the Philippine-American Chamber of Commerce Texas. He speaks frequently on Immigration issues at continuing legal education as well as community and business-related seminars. An AV-Preeminent-rated attorney by his peers, Gary became Board Certified in Immigration and Nationality Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization in 2000 and has been recognized as one of The Best Lawyers in America (2017) and as a Texas Super Lawyer (2012-2016).

Jacqueline L. Watson is a proud El Paso native and undergraduate alum of the University of Texas at El Paso. She earned her J.D. at the University of Texas School of Law. Certified in Immigration and Nationality Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, Jacqueline has practiced immigration law in Austin since 1999 and was honored to become a partner at Walker Gates Vela in 2016. From 2015 to 2016, she served the American Immigration Lawyers Association Texas Chapter as its Chair. Jacqueline is a frequent presenter at state and national immigration law conferences, and her expertise has been cited in publications such as the Austin American Statesman, The Texas Tribune, and the New York Times. In 2009, 2010, and 2011, Jacqueline was selected for inclusion in the Immigration Law section of the Rising Stars list published in Texas Super Lawyers magazine.

Jason Mills is board certified in immigration and nationality law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization and started his practice in Fort Worth, Texas. His office specializes in all areas of immigration and nationality law including nonimmigrant visas for artists, entertainers, and athletes; business related immigration, investors, removal defense, family immigration, consular processing and federal court practice. He attended Texas Wesleyan University School of Law and Cambridge Law School in England. He received his undergraduate degree from Texas A&M University. He is a former editor of the Texas Wesleyan Law Review, Past President of the Texas Wesleyan School of Law Alumni Board, chairman the Texas Aggie Bar Association, chair of the AILA Texas Chapter and past chair of the NBC liaison committee for the American Immigration Lawyer's Association.

Javier Dominguez joined Tahirih in 2014. As the Children's Immigration Attorney, Javier primarily represents immigrant children in family courts, juvenile courts, and immigration court. His legal representation includes filing applications for gender-based asylum, protecting survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking, and other violent crimes, and ensuring that children qualify for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. Prior to Tahirih, Javier worked as a staff attorney for Catholic Charities in



Houston, Texas. Before practicing law, he was the Legislative Director for the League of United Latin American Citizens (“LULAC”) in Washington, D.C., where he used to lobby members of Congress, manage nation-wide policy conferences for the LULAC National Office, author congressional testimony, and track and analyze federal legislation impacting the Hispanic community. Javier was born and raised in the transnational border region of El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Javier is a graduate of Brown University and Seattle School of Law. While at Brown, Javier served as a NASA Space Grant Scholar and taught science classes in Spanish to underprivileged students in Providence, Rhode Island. Nowadays, Javier’s interests include running after his 2-year old toddler, Marcelo Javier, and changing dirty diapers. Before Marcelo was born, Javier’s interests included traveling, playing tennis, reading, and sleeping.

Javier N. Maldonado is a lawyer in private practice in San Antonio, Texas who specializes in representing individuals in complex federal and state litigation in the areas of immigration, employment disputes, and civil rights. He attended Columbia University for both undergraduate and law school and then clerked for the Hon. George P. Kazen in Laredo, Texas. Mr. Maldonado was awarded a Skadden Fellowship to work at the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) and then joined the legal staff at the end of his fellowship. He was subsequently employed as a trial attorney with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and then became the executive director of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights of Texas where he litigated several class action and individual civil rights cases on behalf of immigrants. Since March 2006, Mr. Maldonado has been in private practice and regularly presents at state and national conferences on civil rights and immigration matters. He is a board member of the National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild.

Jennifer Minear is a Director with McCandlish Holton, PC in Richmond, Virginia. Her business immigration practice focuses on physician immigration as well as the representation of other professionals and their employers in employment-based immigration matters. She is a frequent panelist at national and international conferences and CLEs and the author of numerous articles on physician immigration and other topics. A cum laude graduate of Cornell Law School, Jennifer is listed among the Who’s Who of Corporate Immigration Attorneys and was named an “Influential Woman of Virginia” by Virginia Lawyers Weekly. Jennifer is the 2014 recipient of the Susan Quarles AILA Service Excellence Award and currently serves as Treasurer on the AILA national Executive Committee.

Jodi Goodwin practices immigration law in the trenches on the border in Harlingen, Texas. Since 1995 she has represented 1,000’s of asylum seekers, economic migrants, long-term permanent residents, businesses, families, and United States citizens in immigration and nationality matters. Jodi also represents immigrants and United States citizens in federal court in both criminal and civil proceedings. She went to school at the University of Texas (Hook ‘Em!) and St. Mary’s University. Jodi believes the heart and soul of every lawyer should be deeply grounded in truth and a search for justice. She enjoys teaching, especially to new practitioners, and devoting her time to community and pro bono projects. She has many accolades including Texas Super Lawyer and Best Lawyers in America and Texas Lawyer’s Top Notch Immigration Lawyer. Her most coveted achievement was being awarded the Arthur C. Helton Award for Advancing Human Rights in 2007. Jodi is past-Chair of the Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association and has served as a Director for the Cameron



County Bar Association. She also chaired the Cameron and Willacy County Subcommittee of the Unauthorized Practice of Law Committee for the Texas Supreme Court from 1998 to 2015. She is an Advisory Member of the ABA's Commission on Immigration and a member of IMMLAW, the national consortium of immigration lawyers. In her spare time, she devotes hours and hours to her children through active education, traveling and Girl Scouting.

John Wheat Gibson, a graduate of Baylor Law School, has practiced immigration litigation in Dallas for 30 years. He operates as John Wheat Gibson, P.C. His practice is limited to immigration litigation. He has argued several important cases that are frequently cited by the Fifth Circuit, including, *Witter v. INS*, *Brumme v. INS*, *Gunther v. INS*, and *Renteria v. INS*. Together they stand for the proposition that “We are the government and you are not, and therefore we win and you lose.”

Jose A. Barbeito has been an AILA member and practiced U.S. immigration law since 2007. He grew up in Mexico (where he is also licensed as an attorney), and upon relocating to the U.S. personally experienced the complexities of our immigration law system. Jose received an academic scholarship to enroll in the LL.M. program at the University of Missouri – Kansas City School of Law, from which he graduated in 2003. While his original plan was to return to Mexico, where he had previously worked for a major international corporation, he decided to sit for the New York State bar exam and in 2005 became licensed as an attorney in the U.S. Given his background, early in his career he developed an interest in immigration law and initially focused on family-based immigration cases. He further developed his immigration law training and experience working as an Associate Attorney for Stinson Morrison Hecker, a national US law firm representing Fortune 500 and smaller sized corporations. Seeking to be closer to Mexico, he relocated to the state of Texas in 2010 and founded the Law Office of Jose A. Barbeito, PLLC. With offices in Houston and McAllen, TX, he currently serves as legal counsel for several U.S. corporations, typically with *maquiladora* operations that sponsor foreign nationals for H, L or TN visa. Jose has also represented numerous Mexican nationals in obtaining E visa status. He is currently a member of the bar in the states of New York, Missouri (inactive), and Texas.

Juan Carlos Rodríguez is a native of Abilene, Texas and a graduate of St. Edward's University and the Texas Tech University School of Law. While in law school, he was selected by the United States Department of Justice Attorney General's Honors Program for employment with the then Immigration & Naturalization Service. In 2001, Juan Carlos began his legal career with the federal government as an Assistant District Counsel with the Miami Office of the District Counsel for INS. He later transferred to San Antonio, Texas and was a founding member of the Department of Homeland Security while serving as an Assistant Chief Counsel for United States Immigration & Customs Enforcement. Juan Carlos then moved to Dallas where he served as an Assistant United States Attorney for the United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Texas. Juan Carlos then entered private practice and joined De Mott, McChesney, Curtright, and Armendáriz, LLP, in 2011. He was recently named partner and is a senior litigation attorney within the firm. Juan Carlos is Board Certified in Immigration & Nationality law by the State Bar of Texas and is admitted to practice before the United States Courts of Appeals for the Fifth and Eleventh Circuits, and the United States District Courts for the Northern, Western, and Eastern Districts of Texas.



Judy J. Lee – is a Partner of Foster LLP with over 20 years’ experience representing and advising multinational companies, investors, universities and individuals. She handles a broad range of immigration & nationality matters, with special focus on temporary work visas, labor certification, PERM exempt petitions, executive/manager transferees, corporate reorganization strategies and compliance issues. She is Board Certified in Immigration and Nationality Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. She is a former Chapter Chair for AILA’s Texas, Oklahoma, & New Mexico Chapter, and has served on numerous other AILA committees and as a long-time Mentor. She regularly presents at seminars and conferences on a wide variety of immigration topics.

Kathryn N. Karam is Board Certified in Immigration and Nationality by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. Attorney Karam has over 9 years of experience practicing immigration law. She opened her law practice in July 2013. Her office offers services in Spanish, Chinese (both Mandarin and Cantonese), and English. Attorney Karam and her team have built a reputation for offering creative solutions to complex immigration problems, excellent personal service, and care and consideration for their clients’ needs. Attorney Karam began her career at Quan, Burdette, and Perez, P.C., which later became FosterQuan, LLP, in Houston, Texas. During this time, she handled all types of immigration matters, including family-based immigration matters, naturalization and citizenship issues, employment-based matters, non-immigrant visas, issues involving Customs and Border Protection, Violence Against Women Act cases, and detention and removal cases. Attorney Karam was later employed with Greenberg Traurig, LLP in Houston, Texas, where she primarily handled business non-immigrant visa matters. Prior to earning her Juris Doctor (J.D.) from the University of Texas School of Law, Attorney Karam earned a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Chinese from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, and a Certificate in Chinese Studies from the Johns-Hopkins-Nanjing University Center for Chinese and American Studies. Attorney Karam is a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) and served as Advocacy Liaison for AILA’s Texas Chapter from 2010-2013. Attorney Karam was named to the Houston Business Journal’s 40 Under 40 Honorable Mention List in October 2014. She was named a Texas Super Lawyer Rising Star in 2017 and was named a Top Lawyer in Immigration by Houstonia Magazine in 2015 and 2016. The Law Office of Kathryn N. Karam PC recently won the award for Best Service Based Company Under 10 Employees from ActionCoach North America. Attorney Karam has been published in the Houston Business Journal, Houston OilPatch Magazine, OilPro.com, Just Vibe Houston, and Lebanon Times Magazine.

Kenneth J. Harder is certified by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization in Immigration and Nationality Law. Mr. Harder is the Vice Chair of the AILA DOS Liaison Committee and is a former Chair of the AILA Customs and Border Protection Liaison Committee.

Kathleen Campbell Walker is a former national president of (2007-08) and general counsel (2009-10) to the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) www.aila.com. She is a member of the Dykema Cox Smith law firm headquartered in Detroit. She practices from the El Paso, Texas office. In 2014, Ms. Walker received the AILA Founder’s Award which is given from time to time to the person or entity having the most substantial impact on the field of immigration law or policy. In 2012, she was selected by Texas Lawyer as its top “Go-To” Lawyer in Texas in immigration law. She is ranked in Band One as an immigration lawyer in Chambers Global and Chambers USA, and has the only Star Individual ranking in



Texas by Chambers USA. Board certified in Immigration and Nationality Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, she was selected to serve on the Council of Foreign Relations Independent Task Force on U.S. Immigration Policy, which was co-chaired by former Governor Jeb Bush. She has testified multiple times before Congress and at the state level in Texas regarding immigration policy and law.

Kevin Lashus graduated from Stanford University in 1994 and received his Juris Doctor degree from the University of Texas School of Law in 1998. Mr. Lashus is a Partner of the Austin office of FisherBroyles LLP. He is also Board Certified in Immigration and Nationality Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. Mr. Lashus has represented management in employment verification compliance investigations, administrative employer sanctions cases, in-bound business immigration, USCIS fraud investigations and other workplace law matters since 2007. Before moving to the private sector, Mr. Lashus was an Assistant Attorney General for the State of Texas—defending state-wide law enforcement officers accused of civil rights violations and employment discrimination in federal and state court litigation. Shortly after September 11, 2001, he moved on to the US Department of Justice, then ultimately, the US Department of Homeland Security where he prosecuted terrorists and advised Special Agents on the execution of worksite investigations and Form I-9 inspections. Mr. Lashus was a member of the National Security Team—enjoying a Top Secret security clearance. He has presented at national ABA, AILA, SHRM, and FBA seminars contributing articles concerning immigration enforcement and employment verification law matters. A peer survey identified him as a Texas Super Lawyer Rising Star in immigration in 2010 and 2011; and as a Texas Super Lawyer in immigration in 2012 – 2016. Jurisdictions Admitted to Practice: All Texas courts, The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals United States District Court, Eastern District of Texas United States District Court, Southern District of Texas United States District Court, Western District of Texas.

Lance Curtright, a native of Lincoln, Nebraska, has practiced immigration law since 2001. He is Board Certified in Immigration and Nationality Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. Mr. Curtright was selected for inclusion in the 2016 & 2017 editions of The Best Lawyers in America®. Under Mr. Curtright's lead, DMCA's Litigation Section was awarded the 2013 Best Litigation Department of the Year by Texas Lawyer magazine. Mr. Curtright has successfully represented hundreds of clients in deportation proceedings. His successes include published decisions in *Hosseini v. Johnson*, 2016 U.S.App. LEXIS 10969 (June 17, 2016); *Villegas-Sarabia v. Johnson*, 123 F.Supp. 870 (W.D. Tex. 2015); *Amrollah v. Napolitano*, 710 F.3d 568 (5th Cir. 2013); *Matter of Lamus*, 25 I&N Dec. 61 (BIA 2009). He has published articles about immigration law in several law magazines and is a frequent speaker at immigration law conferences. He serves as AILA's Secretary on the executive committee for the Texas Chapter.

Laura Flores Bachman is an attorney in Tulsa, Oklahoma where she serves at Immigration Program Manager at YWCA Tulsa. Laura received her Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from Franciscan University in Ohio and earned her law degree from Suffolk University School of Law in Massachusetts. Since 1996, she has devoted her practice to U.S. immigration and nationality law. She is licensed in Massachusetts, Texas and Oklahoma, and is Board Certified in Immigration and Nationality Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization.



Lauren Joyner is a staff attorney at Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid (TRLA). Lauren has been with TRLA since 2009. She practices exclusively immigration law and works primarily with survivors of domestic violence and other crime. She earned a B.A. from North Carolina State University in 2004 and a J.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2009.

Lawrence E. Rushton graduated with degrees in history and international studies from Texas A&M University. He received his doctorate of jurisprudence from the University of Houston Law Center. He is the managing attorney at the Rushton Law Firm, P.L.L.C. in Bellaire, Texas. The Rushton Law Firm represents clients in court proceedings (Immigration Courts, Federal District Courts and the Federal Circuit Courts of Appeals) and before the immigration service.

Leslie K. Dellon is the Staff Attorney (Business Immigration) at the American Immigration Council, where she encourages business immigration lawyers to consider litigation as another tool to serve their clients, engages in impact litigation and represents amicus curiae before courts and agencies. She also works closely with AILA in monitoring trends in the adjudication of employment-based visa petitions and addressing in various ways other agency actions that affect business immigration, such as commenting on proposed rulemaking. She has 20+ years of business immigration law experience, including representing clients in her own firm, L. Dellon Immigration Law, LLC since August 2011. She is a past AILA DC Chapter chair and has served on AILA National and DC Chapter committees. She has a J.D. from the George Washington University Law School.

Lisa Brodyaga has practiced immigration law since 1978. Since 1985, she has worked with Refugio Del Rio Grande, a §501(c)(3) refugee camp and law office on a 45-acre wilderness near San Benito, TX. She is also of counsel with Reina & Bates, Immigration Law Group. Ms. Brodyaga has worked with undocumented Mexicans, asylum-seekers, lawful permanent residents fighting deportation, and most recently, U.S. citizens experiencing difficulty obtaining passports or experiencing mistreatment by CBP or the U.S. Department of State.

Magali Suárez Candler, Principal at Suárez Candler Law, Houston, TX, has been practicing immigration law for over 27 years. Past Chair of the Texas Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), and a past EOIR National Liaison Committee member, she is currently the Advocacy Co-Liaison for the Texas Chapter of AILA. She is Board certified in Immigration and Nationality Law in Texas, and received the J. Chrys Dougherty Legal Services Award from the State Bar of Texas in 1999 for her longtime work at Catholic Charities in Houston. Co-counsel on a 2012 win at the Supreme Court, *Umer v. Holder*, she is licensed at the U.S. Supreme Court, the Fifth and Eleventh Circuits, and the U.S. District Court, Southern District of Texas. Ms. Candler is a frequent speaker nationally and regionally.

Maggie Murphy is the Managing Principal of the Austin office of Jackson Lewis P.C. in Austin, Texas. She is Board Certified in Immigration & Nationality Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization and is currently serving as the Vice Chair of the Texas Chapter of AILA. She is also a founding member and Past Chair of the State Bar of Texas Immigration & Nationality Law Section and is currently serving on the Council. Maggie also serves on the State Bar's Committee on Laws Relating to Immigration and



Nationality. Maggie specializes in complex employment-based immigration cases and has sub-specialties in complicated work visa and permanent residence filings. She focuses a good portion of her practice on helping employers of all sizes with PERM cases and PERM campaigns as well as immigration-related employer compliance issues, including I-9 audits and investigations, E-Verify compliance training and initiatives, and export-control compliance. Maggie's work spans a diverse client base, including organizations, companies and institutions technology and eCommerce, media, healthcare, retail, hospitality, higher education, energy and education. Ms. Murphy is a frequent speaker on business-related visa, permanent residence and immigration compliance topics. She is a Texas "Super Lawyer" in Immigration & Nationality Law, and has also been ranked in Chambers USA is listed as a Recommended Attorney in Legal 500.

Maria McIntyre realized her passion for U.S. immigration law at an early age when she observed the challenges her mother faced as she began immigrating her family from Vietnam to the United States. Ms. McIntyre began practicing immigration law in 2003, initially focused on H-2A agricultural and H-2B seasonal visas. For the past 10 years, Ms. McIntyre's practice has focused exclusively on deportation defense, family-based immigration, and citizenship and naturalization. Ms. McIntyre graduated with honors from Texas Christian University in 1998 with a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Political Science. In 2002, Ms. McIntyre earned her Juris Doctor (J.D.) from Texas Wesleyan University School of Law. Ms. McIntyre has served as an expert witness on the practice of immigration law for the State of Texas and balancing the chaos of immigration law by teaching yoga in the evenings.

Matt Gaffron is an associate attorney at Coane and Associates, PLLC. He received a Bachelor's degree in Journalism from Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, and a Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Houston Law Center. Prior to law school, he worked as an immigration and litigation paralegal. While in law school he served as the Membership Director for the Student Division of the State Bar of Texas and participated in the Competitive Negotiation team. Mr. Gaffron is licensed to practice in the state of Texas. In his spare time he enjoys writing, film study, and spending time with his wife and two daughters.

Melissa M. Lopez is the Executive Director/Attorney at Law of Diocesan Migrant and Refugee Services. She began working at DMRS in August 2007 as a Staff Attorney. Shortly after being hired, she was named Supervisor of the Removal Defense Unit. From August 2007 to February 2013, she represented individuals in removal proceedings before the El Paso Immigration Court helping them seek benefits ranging from Cancellation of Removal to Adjustment of Status, and everything in between. She graduated from the University of Texas at El Paso in May 2004 with a Bachelor of Arts (majored in Political Science, minored in Professional Writing and Rhetoric) and from the University of Texas School of Law in Austin, Texas in May 2007. Melissa has practiced immigration law exclusively since graduating from law school because she finds the work challenging. She has spoken at numerous conferences, especially as it relates to working with survivors of crime, domestic violence, and human trafficking. She feels that this work chose her and is motivated by the joy on people's faces when they realize that they can stay in the United States permanently without the fear of deportation hanging over them.



Lance Curtright, a native of Lincoln, Nebraska, has practiced immigration law since 2001. He is Board Certified in Immigration and Nationality Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. Mr. Curtright was selected for inclusion in the 2016 & 2017 editions of The Best Lawyers in America®. Under Mr. Curtright's lead, DMCA's Litigation Section was awarded the 2013 Best Litigation Department of the Year by Texas Lawyer magazine. Mr. Curtright has successfully represented hundreds of clients in deportation proceedings. His successes include published decisions in *Hosseini v. Johnson*, 2016 U.S.App. LEXIS 10969 (June 17, 2016); *Villegas-Sarabia v. Johnson*, 123 F.Supp. 870 (W.D. Tex. 2015); *Amrollah v. Napolitano*, 710 F.3d 568 (5th Cir. 2013); *Matter of Lamus*, 25 I&N Dec. 61 (BIA 2009). He has published articles about immigration law in several law magazines and is a frequent speaker at immigration law conferences. He serves as AILA's Secretary on the executive committee for the Texas Chapter.

Michelle L. Saenz-Rodriguez is the co-founder of Saenz-Rodriguez & Associates in Dallas, Texas. Now in her 25th year of practice, Michelle is Board Certified in Immigration and Nationality Law by the State Bar of Texas. She started as a Judicial Law Clerk under the Attorney General's Honor Program for 7 Immigration Judges in Harlingen, Texas. She began her immigration practice shortly thereafter and has remained a passionate advocate for immigrants from around the world. Michelle is former Chair for the Texas Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers. She is currently a member of the ABA Commission on Immigration. Michelle is active in her local community where she serves as a volunteer for pro bono lawyers who are representing unaccompanied minors and mothers with young children who are fleeing Central America due to the uncontrollable violence that continues to plague the area. Michelle is a candidate for the AILA Board of Governors. The election will take place starting in Mid-May and up until the AILA National Conference in New Orleans. The Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico Chapter of AILA currently does not have a representative on the AILA BOG. Please cast your vote so that our Chapter can have a voice in the issues that are most important to OUR Chapter and OUR members!

Nancy Taylor Shivers- Shivers & Shivers- is a partner of Shivers & Shivers, practicing with her husband Robert. She has 30 years of experience representing a broad range of clients ranging from employers to individuals, handling both employment and family based immigration, as well as employer compliance and naturalization. She is board certified in immigration and nationality law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. She has served as Chapter Chair for the Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico Chapter of AILA and on the AILA national Board of Governors. She has chaired state immigration conferences and is a frequent presenter at state and national conference on a range of immigration topics.

Olsa Alikaj-Cano, was born and raised in Albania, and it was very natural for her to follow the path of immigration law, immediately after graduating from the University of Houston Law Center. She is a Senior Attorney at Foster LLP, and she is Board Certified in Immigration and Nationality Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. She is an active member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, and she currently serves as the AILA Texas Chapter New Members Division Liaison. She focuses primarily on cases involving federal litigation as well as cases with removal and deportation issues before the Executive Office of Immigration Review. She was selected to Rising Stars 2016, and 2017 for immigration, by the Super Lawyers magazine, and she currently serves as a council member of the



Houston Area Council on Human Trafficking, invited by the Mayor of Houston to join the Mayor's Human Trafficking Task Force.

Olsi Vrap is the managing partner at Noble & Vrap, P.A. He has spoken at more conferences than his family appreciate him being gone for and has participated in more AILA committees than his partners and staff appreciate him spending time on. He is also an adjunct professor of law at University of New Mexico School of Law. Full time teaching is not his thing since he loves representing immigrants achieve their goals and dreams.

Pamela D. Nieto – Counsel with BakerHostetler, in Houston, TX, practices exclusively in the immigration and nationality law field, primarily assisting businesses address their immigration needs. Whether a company desires to transfer employees from an office abroad, needs to hire foreign nationals to fill vacant positions, is interested in obtaining work visas in connection with opening an office or starting a new venture in the U.S., or seeks to assist foreign national employees obtain their green cards, she advises clients of their options and explains the requirements, issues and processes involved. She also provides training and assistance in setting up, improving and auditing compliance programs to meet various immigration-related requirements. She presents at seminars and conferences on various immigration topics and serves as Adjunct Professor at the University of Houston Law Center, teaching the Business and Immigration Law course.

Paul Minton is one of the Watch Commanders for the Port of Brownsville. He brings a wide variety of experiences to the Port of Brownsville. Mr. Minton started his career with the Immigration and Naturalization Service in 1992 as an Immigration Inspector in Los Angeles. After tours of duty in Guam; San Francisco; Oroville, WA; and Headquarters, CBP, where he worked in both the Immigration Advisory Program (IAP), and in the Enforcement Programs Division (EPD) offices. While working in EPD, Mr. Minton was recognized by the Secretary of Homeland Security for his efforts in participating in the work group which implemented PREA regulations for detention in CBP and DHS. Mr. Minton has been at the Port of Brownsville since December 2014; supporting the mission of CBP and DHS, while implementing the vision to make the Port of Brownsville the premier port of entry in the United States.

Petra Horne is the Port Director for the Port of Brownsville. She brings a wealth of experience to this position. PD Horne began her career with the Immigration and Naturalization Service in 1988 as a student aide at the Port Isabel Service Processing Center, and became an Immigration Inspector at the Port of Brownsville in 1994. After assignments in Toronto, Canada, Washington, DC at the Fraudulent Documents Analysis Unit, and as a first-line Supervisory Customs and Border Protection Officer, PD Horne was selected as a Watch Commander at the National Targeting Center-Passenger in Reston, Virginia, where she lead the team that intercepted the Times Square bomber. In 2011, PD Horne was promoted to the position of Director, Enforcement Programs, with the Office of Field Operations Headquarters. There, she directed the development of admissibility policy and provided operational oversight of enforcement programs at the national level. PD Horne was selected as the Assistant Port Director for the Port of El Paso, the 2nd busiest land port of entry in 2013, where she was responsible for oversight of Passenger Operations. She has been the Port Director in Brownsville since 2014.



Ramon E. Curiel is a partner at Oliva, Saks, Garcia & Curiel, L.L.P. in San Antonio, Texas, and has practiced immigration law for more than 17 years. He received his J.D. from Texas Tech University School of Law and an LL.M. in International Law from St. Mary's University. He has served as the AILA Liaison for the San Antonio District Office of USCIS for eight years. He is currently a member of the AILA National CBP Liaison Committee, the Chair for the CBP Committee for the Latin American and Caribbean Chapter, member of the CBP/USCIS Committee for the Rome District Chapter, and the local CBP Liaison for San Antonio. He is a past-chair of the International Law Section of the San Antonio Bar Association. He also served as a member of the Unauthorized Practice of Law Committee of the Supreme Court of Texas in San Antonio. He practices exclusively immigration law focused on business related cases with an emphasis on professionals, entrepreneurs and investors.

Rick Gump has significant experience in strategic planning for business and personal visas for international personnel and immigration related compliance and risk assessment. Mr. Gump handled the first employer sanctions case filed in the Southwestern United States under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 ("IRCA"), and was co-counsel in one of the largest civil/criminal settlements in worksite compliance history. Rick Gump advises businesses and individuals on visas, citizenship, and employment eligibility verification matters including Form I-9 verification audits.

Robert Crane has practiced immigration law with Jones & Crane law firm in Weslaco Texas since 1979. He has been a member of AILA since 1980 and certified specialist in Immigration and Nationality Law by the Texas board since 1984. He is associated with Jaime M. Diez, also board certified, who has been notably successful in litigating U.S. passport denials and revocations for both native and foreign born U.S. citizens, and with Hector O. Barrera, who handles the firms immigration court practice almost single handedly. He has presented a number of papers for AILA's Texas Chapter. Degrees: Juris Doctor, University of Houston, 1967; MBA University of Michigan, 1961; B.A. Chemistry, Pan American College 1959.

Simon Azar-Farr practices in the fields of immigration defense and federal criminal defense. Below is a listing of some of his more notable cases. His published articles can be found in the respective journals or on his firm's website.

Susan Bond – Susan Bond, PC- Susan Bond, PC is a boutique firm, specializing in employment-based immigration. Ms. Bond represents employers in complex employment-based immigration cases and immigration related compliance issues such as I-9 audits and investigations. Ms. Bond is a frequent speaker on employment-based immigration issues, serves on the AILA National Media & Advocacy Committee and SBOT Immigration & Nationality Law Section. Ms. Bond received her J.D. from the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 1999, is admitted to the State Bar of Texas and State Bar of Missouri and a member of AILA since 1999.