

Texas Law Fellowships is proud to honor the following individuals for their dedication and unique contributions to the field of public interest law.

**Betty Rodriguez** has been employed as an attorney with the Travis County Juvenile Public Defender's Office since April 1991. She is a senior attorney and obtained her board certification in Juvenile Law in 2002. In conjunction with her employment at the Travis County Juvenile Public Defender's Office, Ms. Rodriguez is an adjunct professor for The University of Texas School of Law Juvenile Justice Clinic. Rodriguez has worked in the Travis County Sheriff's Office as a legal researcher and as a caseworker for Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Austin. She holds a Bachelor of Social Work and J.D. from The University of Texas at Austin.

**Allison Wetzel** is the chief assistant district attorney in the Family Justice Division of the Travis County DA's office and is board certified in Criminal Law. She graduated with a business degree from The University of Texas and obtained her J.D. from the University of Houston. Ms. Wetzel began her career in the Dallas County District Attorney's office. In 2003, Ms. Wetzel served as the Chief Prosecutor on one of Austin's most profile cases, *Celeste Beard v. Texas*. Her successes have been well chronicled by major newspapers and network television including *Court TV*. Yet, her most significant contributions to the community are arguably the hundreds of felonies she has successfully prosecuted involving child victims.

**Michael Marin** is a trial attorney at Vinson & Elkins in Austin. Mr. Marin graduated from The University of Texas at El Paso with a B.A. in Political Science. He received his M.B.A. with highest honors from Golden Gate University and his J.D. from Harvard Law School. His contributions to public service date back to law school where he worked for the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau. He has been listed as a "Texas Rising Star" in business litigation by *Texas Monthly* and one of five "Attorneys to Watch," by the *Austin Business Journal*. His public contributions include leadership offices for Legal Aid of Central Texas, Project One-to-One, and the Hispanic Bar Association of Austin's Charitable Foundation. He is also a member of the Austin Bar Foundation. Mr. Marin serves on the boards of CASA and KLRU Public Television and is the president of the Austin Bar Association.

**The University of Texas Actual Innocence Clinic** was started in the fall of 2003 by UT Law professors William P. Allison, Robert O. Dawson, and David A. Sheppard. Under their supervision, students at the Law School screen and investigate claims of actual innocence from inmates. The program aims to create an organized approach to finding and assisting the actually innocent, and to uncover the precise causes of these types of wrongful convictions. The instructors and students involved in the clinic are helping the legal community create remedies to ensure that the situation that gave rise to a particular innocent

defendant does not happen again. In the two years since the program's inception, hundreds of cases have been reviewed and over a dozen have been investigated, giving hope to those inmates who may have been wrongly convicted and a greater understanding of the legal system to the dedicated students involved.

**Maunica Sthanki** is a 3L at UT Law. Her roots lie in India, Uganda, and Louisiana. This multi-cultural and multi-racial background has led her to explore the intersection of oppression as it relates to race, class, and gender. In college, Maunica focused her studies on gender issues as related to Indian women. After graduating from Louisiana State University, Maunica worked with Women's EDGE and NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund in the Immigrant Women's Program. In law school, Maunica has worked with the Political Asylum Project of Austin, the National Legal Aid Defenders Association, the Texas Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, and The University of Texas School of Law Immigration and Housing clinics. Maunica is currently exploring her future options, but would love to find a job where she could sue the government.