



# SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

October 2, 2023

Dear Friends,

In *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis takes us on a faith-filled journey to the “heart of what it is to be human,” reminding us that for “all our limitations, gestures of generosity, solidarity and care cannot but well up within us since we were made for love.” The Pope’s profound teaching that human beings naturally yearn for long-term loving relationships rather than atomistic, short-term, self-interested, and consumptive transactions finds overwhelming evidentiary support from recent scientific discoveries in diverse disciplines, including brain imaging, neuroscience, hedonics, behavioral economics, cognitive development, and educational psychology.



What would a law school community look like if it were based on a genuine appreciation for the truth that we were in fact made for love? It would look a lot like Santa Clara Law.

At our heart, we are a relational law school, bound together by a covenant of loving kindness. Our covenant—our coming together in an enduring vow of mutual loyalty, reciprocal respect, and allegiant care—informs how we teach, research, practice, advocate, include, listen, engage, debate, serve, treat each other, and treat strangers. In our classrooms, corridors, conferences, co-curricular activities, clinics, and communities, our faculty and staff educators model collaborative, social constructivist pedagogies, inspiring our students both to form relationship-building skills and to develop meaningful relationships, from which professional knowledge, competencies, values, success, service, and well-being are constructed. At our law school, we know that the growth of relationship-building skills such as empathy, engaged listening, respect, and design thinking distinguish merely good lawyers from truly great Santa Clara lawyers.

We also appreciate that loving relationships are indispensable to achieving our social justice mission and pursuing the [Universal Apostolic Preferences](#). After all, those Preferences themselves call us together to form relationships so that we can “**show**” each other the way to discernment, “**walk with**” those whose dignity has been violated in a mission of reconciliation and justice, “**accompany**” our students in the creation of a hope-filled and diverse future, and “**collaborate**” in the care of our common home and the just distribution of goods and services.

We continue to answer the call of those preferences in countless ways. On September 22, our law school hosted the 16th annual Northern California International Legal Scholars symposium. Co-founded by Professor David Sloss, the symposium brought to Charney Hall leading scholars across a range of international law fields, including our own Professor Taylor Dalton. In true Santa Clara Law relational spirit, the scholars shared their latest path-breaking work and engaged each other in respectful and constructive feedback which elevated the work of all.

On September 29, our Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center celebrated the kind of abiding dedication to community, commitment, and courage that informs all of its efforts to pursue social justice. Before the celebration, three incredible Santa Clara Law alumni, who forged an enduring and powerful relationship as law school study partners, presented a professional development forum



dedicated to teaching bias-mitigation strategies. In their pre-Celebration MCLE, "From 1L's to Leaders - Tools and Strategies for Addressing Implicit Bias in the Legal Profession," Judge Shelyna V. Brown '96 (ret.), Kristin Nevarez '96, and Tricia Montalvo Timm '96, with Judge Haywood S. Gilliam, Jr. moderating, not only offered important and elucidating lessons, they also exemplified the power of timeless Santa Clara Law relationships.



On October 6, our Northern California Innocence Project will similarly celebrate the power of relationships to advance the cause of justice and reconciliation. NCIP will host its annual Justice for All Awards Gala at the Julia Morgan Ballroom in San Francisco, lifting up the work of its incredible team of practitioners, advocates, students, volunteers, faculty, staff, and community partners who walk with wrongfully incarcerated persons in a mission of reconciliation and justice. I know that the members of the NCIP team would join me in expressing our great gratitude for the generosity of spirit of our more than two-dozen sponsors who have supported the Gala and NCIP at the Advocate level or higher. I also know that the NCIP team would extol the deeply human virtues of their exonerees, who are incarnations of the Pope's message that we were made for love.

With warm regards and tremendous gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael". The signature is fluid and cursive.

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