

### **Executive Board**

**(Term ends: 2023)**

**Brad Maze, Chair**

[brad@palmerrey.com](mailto:brad@palmerrey.com)



Mr. Maze was born in South Africa, where his grandparents had fled to in the 1930s to escape the growing anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe. In 1972, due to the strained political climate, Mr. Maze's parents left South Africa and eventually settled in Palo Alto, California. Thus Mr. Maze's life has been shaped by two generations of immigration experience.

As a high school student, Mr. Maze spent a year in Paris, during which he acquired a knowledge of French—a language that would prove extremely useful in his later career as an immigration lawyer.

Mr. Maze attended the University of Washington, where he received a dual B.A. degree in International Relations and Comparative History of Ideas. He also earned a master's degree in Middle Eastern History from Tel Aviv University in Israel. During his two years of study there, he developed a working fluency of Arabic, a language that, like French, would prove useful in his work with asylum seekers.

After graduate school, Mr. Maze returned to the US and began working for Freedom House Detroit, a non-profit organization that assists refugees seeking asylum and protective status in the US and Canada.

In July 2017, he and his two law partners founded the Palmer Rey law firm. "Palmer Rey" is a made up name: "Palmer" refers to the palm leaves pilgrims carry as sign of peace in the lands they journey through. "Rey" means king in Spanish. The message Mr. Maze and his partners want to convey is that "immigrants should be respected and treated like royalty." The name of the firm, which refers to the clients and their aspirations, rather than to the lawyers themselves, is a way to do this.

**Abril Valdes Siewert, Vice Chair**

[abril@cgblegal.com](mailto:abril@cgblegal.com)



Abril Valdes Siewert has dedicated her career to helping the immigrant community. She received her J.D., from the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law and her B.A. in English, from California State University Los Angeles. Ms. Siewert is licensed in the state of Michigan and California. She was appointed a Commissioner by Governor Whitmer to the Hispanic Latino Commission of Michigan. Formerly, as the immigrant rights attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Michigan, she was on the front lines of the Trump administration's zero tolerance policy. Through this role, she led various

trainings and workshops to educate attorneys and the community on critical immigration issues. She has represented individuals in family and employment-based proceedings, along with Special Immigrant Juveniles and DACA.

**Kimberly Buddin, Recording Secretary**

[kbuddin@aclu.org](mailto:kbuddin@aclu.org)



Kimberly Buddin is a civil rights attorney currently serving as Senior Policy Counsel of the ACLU's Justice Division, which leads the ACLU's political, legislative, and electoral advocacy on criminal justice reform, policing, drug law reform and ending the death penalty.

Prior to joining ACLU National, Kimberly served as Policy Counsel for the ACLU of Michigan from 2016-2021, initially joining as a Legal Fellow in 2015. In Michigan, she regularly worked with local and state legislators, policymakers, and organizations to develop effective policies and projects to protect civil rights and civil liberties and address issues of injustice and inequity faced by underrepresented groups. In addition to Kimberly's experience and passion for policy and

issue-based campaign work, she regularly consulted on, provided research for, and publicly spoke about a multitude of issues relevant to current social and political climates including racial justice, immigration, prisoners' rights, free speech, poverty, privacy and technology, and gender justice.

Outside of her work with the ACLU, Kimberly is an adjunct professor at Wayne State Law School in Detroit, MI where she teaches courses on practical lawyering skills and the First Amendment. She also currently serves on the Michigan Intelligence Operations Center for Homeland Security Advisory Board, appointed by Governor Gretchen Whitmer, and as a Commissioner on the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission. In her spare time, Kimberly volunteers as a pro-bono immigration attorney, and is actively involved in justice related work within the State Bar of Michigan.

Kimberly received her B.A. in Psychology and Political Science from the University of Michigan and a J.D. from Michigan State University College of Law, where she focused on civil rights, human rights, immigration, and criminal law.

### **Farah Hobballah, Corresponding Secretary**

[farah@myfarahlawyer.com](mailto:farah@myfarahlawyer.com)



Farah Hobballah is the Principal Attorney at Hobballah Legal Group, PLC which exclusively serves the immigration community. She sits on several boards and co-chairs the Immigration Section of the Federal Bar Association.

Ms. Hobballah works with victims of sex trafficking as well as VAWA victims and helps secure their status in the United States. Ms. Hobballah practices in immigration courts and federal courts all around the United States. She sits on AILA's national ICE liaison committee and has served her community in multiple capacities.

Ms. Hobballah is the President of the nationally acclaimed Arab-American Political Action Committee (AAPAC) and in that role helps the Arabic-speaking community read and understand candidate details and proposals on election ballots and material. Ms. Hobballah recently won a Humanitarian Visa for three

orphaned children from a non-hague country that forbids adoption. She has represented individuals in every area of immigration law ranging from constitutional violations in Federal Courts to Removal/Deportation defense in Immigration courts.

She received her J.D., from Western Michigan University Cooley Law School and her B.A. in English Literature from the University of Michigan. Ms. Hobballah is licensed in the state of Michigan.

**Arturo Alfaro**

[AAlfaro@plunkettcooney.com](mailto:AAlfaro@plunkettcooney.com)



Arturo Alfaro is a member of Plunkett Cooney's Transportation Law Practice Group who focuses his practice primarily in the areas of motor vehicle negligence and no-fault law.

He advises his clients on all aspects of pre-suit claims, including strategic planning for anticipated litigation and providing opinions regarding coverage and priority. Mr. Alfaro also maintains a multi-faceted immigration law

practice through which he assists individuals and families with family-based petitions and Visa processing, including permanent residency and removal of residency conditions. His practice includes naturalization and other types of applications, including employment authorizations and change of status filings. When litigation arises, he represents clients in removal /deportation cases, asylum interviews, change of venue motions and bond hearings.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **Marva De Armas (Term ends:2023)**



Marva De Armas is a partner attorney at De Armas & De Armas Law, a law firm created to provide legal guidance and representation to Hispanics in all areas of the law. Marva is an attorney who cares- about her clients and her community. Her professional and personal philosophy includes giving back in ways that make a meaningful difference to the local and national communities to which she dedicates her practice. Being a Spanish speaking attorney means Marva knows the ins and outs of the law and issues Latinos face.

Marva also works with victims of crimes and minors, including trafficking visas and u visas for qualifying crimes, special immigrant juveniles, and VAWA petitions. Representing these vulnerable communities with compassion is what differentiates De Armas & De Armas Law from the legal community. Marva also practices family law and criminal defense.

### **Ruby Robinson (Term ends:2023)**



Ruby is a managing attorney at the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center in its Washtenaw County office. While he focuses primarily on humanitarian relief for victims of domestic violence/crime, as well as naturalization matters, he is very familiar with removal defense, immigration consequences for criminal behavior, and in general, most other areas of immigration law (except employment-based immigration). He graduated from Wayne State University Law School.



**Christopher Dutot(Term ends:2023)**



Christopher Dutot is an immigration attorney with Miller Canfield. Chris has extensive background working with clients in the IT, automotive and health care sectors. He has helped both businesses and individuals with immigrant, non-immigrant and naturalization matters.

Chris is a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, Michigan Chapter, and is active in the New Members Division Committee, Citizenship Month Coordinator October 2022. Along with AILA National New Members Division Committee and Annual Conference Planning Committee – Fundamentals Track. He is a graduate of University of Detroit Mercy School of Law and Central Michigan University.

**Jonathan Contreras (Term ends: 2024)**



Jonathan Contreras is the attorney and founder of Merced Law in Lincoln Park, MI focusing his practice on Removal Defense and Family Immigration.

Jonathan is a first generation Mexican-American originally from Grand Rapids. His interest in immigration law began when he was a community organizer advocating for immigrants' rights and immigration reform. He earned a B.A. in Psychology from the University of Michigan-Dearborn (2010) and his J.D. from the University of Detroit-Mercy (2016).

### **Ellie Mosko (Term ends: 2024)**



Ellie Mosko has been exclusively practicing immigration law since graduating from University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. In 2015, Ellie opened Mosko Law PC, an immigration law firm dedicated to providing the highest quality of compassionate and personalized legal advice and counsel to individuals, families and business.

Prior to working as the principal attorney at Mosko Law PC, Ellie worked as the Regional Attorney for Justice for Our Neighbors-Southeastern Michigan, providing free legal immigration services to the Southeastern Michigan immigrant community representing hundreds of clients from all over the world on a wide range of immigration legal issues, and as an of-counsel immigration attorney at the law firm Ellis Porter, PLC. In law school and after graduating, Ellie interned and volunteered at the Archdiocese of Detroit Community Immigration Legal Services.

Ellie is an active member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) and State Bar of Michigan and co-founder and Past President member of the Jewish Bar Association of Michigan (JBAM).

### **Rebecca Olszewski (Term ends 2025)**



Rebecca Olszewski is the Director of La Casa Amiga Legal Clinic. A 2002 graduate of the University of Michigan Law School, she has almost twenty years of providing non-profit immigrant assistance, starting as an Equal Justice Works Fellow at Farmworker Legal Services in southwest Michigan.

She later went on to help immigrant survivors at the Center for Women and Families, a domestic violence shelter, and Catholic Charities of Louisville in

Louisville, Kentucky. Returning to Michigan, Rebecca found a home at La Casa Amiga in Pontiac, a part of Catholic Charities of Southeastern Michigan, working as a part-time attorney serving the Pontiac community and its surroundings.

In March 2020, Rebecca became the director of the newly reformed La Casa Amiga Legal Clinic & Community Programs. La Casa Amiga Legal Clinic currently provides low bono and pro bono immigration legal assistance on family and humanitarian-based petitions and community-based education outreach. Rebecca provides legal immigration services to our community and serves as the legal clinic's director.

### **Robert Mirque (Term ends: 2025)**



Robert F. Mirque Jr. is an attorney practicing U.S. immigration law in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Mr. Mirque was admitted to practice law in 1992. Prior to seeing any clients, he clerked for the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Western District of Michigan and the Eastern District of Michigan. From there, he clerked with the Hon. Horace W. Gilmore, United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. After working for the court, Mr. Mirque joined a large law firm where he represented both individuals and businesses in immigration matters.

In 2000, Mr. Mirque left the firm to establish his own firm.

Mirque Law was created to provide the immigration client with "a better legal experience". In doing so, the firm adopted a "client centered" approach to handling cases. In a nutshell, our mission is based on the fact that without clients it doesn't matter how much mahogany and marble is in the lobby and unless we truly focus on the client, we simply won't be around for very long. Our office exists wholly for the benefit of the client and not the other way around.



### **Mani Khavajian (Term ends: 2025)**



Mani Khavajian immigrated to the United States from Iran in 1987. He obtained his undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan and obtained his law degree from the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. He was first exposed to the area of immigration law as the research assistant to Professor David C. Koelsch (Now Judge Koelsch). Mr. Khavajian drafted his first Padilla motion as a second year law student and he has built his practice on vacating criminal convictions due to constitutional errors and terminating removal proceedings due to the vacated criminal conviction that triggered removal. Mr. Khavajian regularly provides lectures at conferences sponsored by the Criminal

Defense Attorneys of Michigan in order to educate the criminal defense bar about the immigration consequences of criminal activity. Mr. Khavajian has had the pleasure of serving as the Board Chair for Justice for Our Neighbors and was a fellow with Freedom House Detroit. He is a firm believer that the best removal defense starts in a criminal courtroom.

### **Krista Hurst(Term ends: 2025)**



Krista Hurst is a partner with Fisher & Phillips LLP. A graduate of the University of Detroit-Mercy School of Law, Krista has been exclusively practicing in the area of immigration law since 2003. She has extensive experience with employment-based petitions and visas. Krista guides employers and employees through the business immigration process from hire/international transfer to employment-based green card process to U.S. citizenship. She has also helped companies navigate USCIS issued requests for evidence on specialty occupation, employer-employee relationship and wage level challenges, as well as

assisted clients with Department of Labor audits on Foreign Labor Certification Applications and supervised recruitment.

### **Rebeca Ontiveros-Chavez (Term ends: 2024)**



Rebecca is an attorney at the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center's (MIRC) Washtenaw County office. She represents unaccompanied immigrant children and individuals in the metro Detroit area on various immigration matters. In 2019, she was appointed by the Michigan Supreme Court to the Foreign Language Board of Review as the Limited English Proficiency Populations Advocate. Rebecca has played an integral role in creating the Immigrant

Justice Lab, an interdisciplinary team-based approach that brings students together from different disciplines at the University of Michigan to assist in asylum cases. She also advocates for racial equity as a member of the Michigan Advocacy Program's Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Rebecca is committed to ensuring that all youth have access to higher education regardless of immigration status and help lead the Michigan Coalition for Undocumented Student Success.

As a law student, Rebecca was the executive articles editor of the Michigan Journal of Race & Law and co-president of the Latino Law Students Association. She was also a student-attorney for the Child Welfare Appellate Clinic and the Civil-Criminal Litigation Clinic. Before law school, she worked for U.S. Senator Michael Bennet and was the communications director for the Congressional Hispanic Staff Association in Washington, D.C. Rebecca earned a B.A. in political science from the Metropolitan State University of Denver in 2009 and a J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School in 2016.

**Sarah Yore-Van Oosterhout (Term ends: 2024)**



In 2008, Sarah completed her undergraduate studies at Calvin College. During her time there, she studied abroad, volunteered in Grand Rapids schools, tutored adults in GED programs, and worked with immigrant mothers at Cherry Street Medical Clinic, all the time putting to good use her Spanish language fluency and social work training. Sarah attended the Michigan State University College of Law, devoting herself to the study of immigration and public interest law. Following law school, Sarah, her husband, and young daughter moved to Mexico for a year where her husband completed his doctoral research. In the fall of 2013, Sarah started work at the Diocese of Grand Rapids, Immigration Legal Services, serving as one of two full-time attorneys. She tackled a wide variety of family-based immigration cases and grew accustomed to handling a high volume caseload while still offering high quality legal services. Sarah left the Diocese of Grand Rapids in December 2014 and soon discovered for-profit legal services were not what Holland immigrants needed. And so, she pioneered Lighthouse Immigrant Advocates. In addition to her work at Lighthouse, Sarah is a mother to two young daughters, Evie (10 years old) and Bay (7 years old).

**Caterina Amaro-Luedtke (Term ends: 2025)**



Caterina Amaro dedicates her practice exclusively to Immigration Law: both the Family and Employment side of things. My concentration involves Family Visas, Fiance/Spousal Visas, Asylum, Motions to Reopen, Appeals to the Board of Immigration Appeals, Adjustment of Status, Removal of Conditions, Naturalization/Citizenship, Deportation/Removal.

### **Alexander Gibson Vernon (Term ends: 2023)**



Alex Vernon is the Director, Immigration Law Clinic and Assistant Professor of Law. He practices exclusively in immigration law. Professor Vernon joined Detroit Mercy Law faculty in 2016. He directs the Immigration Law Clinic where students assist people fleeing for their lives, struggling for family unity, and striving to regularize their status in the United States. Professor Vernon is a volunteer attorney with the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center and Freedom House Detroit. He is a Board Member of Detroit's Southwest Immigrant and Refugee Center and the Organización Internacional de Latinos en el Exterior as well as participating in the Canadian Council of Refugees. He is fluent in French. In his free time, Professor Vernon coaches hockey at the Clark Park Detroit outdoor rink, and soccer with the Windsor Soccer Club.