YULANDA L. CURTIS

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Director, Veterans Legal Clinic
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TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Illinois College of Law *Champaign, IL*
Director, Clinical Program (2025-Present)
Director, Veterans Legal Clinic (2018-Present)
Clinical Professor (2023-Present)
Associate Clinical Professor (2021-2023)
Assistant Clinical Professor (2018-2021)

- Responsible for the design, development, and implementation of all aspects of the Veterans Legal Clinic (VLC).
- Teach students in the VLC seminar lawyering skills, substantive law, procedure, and ethics.
- Supervise students in their representation of veterans throughout central Illinois in a variety of legal matters ranging from contract disputes to family law issues.
- Obtained $15,000 research grant from the Military Service Knowledge Collaborative (MSKC) to study veteran homelessness following incarceration.

University of Michigan Law School
Clinical Teaching Fellow (2015 – 2018) *Ann Arbor, MI*

- Developed curriculum for inaugural and subsequent semesters, strengthened relationships with veteran related organizations, and conducted outreach to increase the referral base for the full-service Veterans Legal Clinic.
- Co-managed and co-taught seven-credit general, civil clinic designed to address the legal and social needs of veterans and their families.
- Independently supervised upper level law students representing veterans in child support/custody, landlord/tenant, disability benefits, and estate planning matters.
- Taught substantive veterans' law (such as administrative law and trial advocacy) and lawyering skills (such as client counseling, negotiation, and collaboration).

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Department of Veterans Affairs
Associate Counsel (2013-2015) *Washington, DC*

- Selected by senior government officials to present ideas regarding potential training upgrades as part of an agency innovation competition.
- Volunteered to participate in VA outreach programs and selected for the VA's yearlong Aspiring Leaders Program.
- Drafted appellate decisions and remands for approval by Veterans' Law Judges that consistently exceeded their established quality rubric.
- Researched and applied applicable case law from the United States Court of Veterans Appeals and the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.
- Analyzed medical and lay evidence, identified multiple legal issues, and ensured all appropriate procedural requirements were met.

Veterans Service Representative (2011-2012) *Detroit, MI*

- Volunteered to participate in VA outreach programs and received three awards for exceeding performance guidelines.
- Adjudicated claims submitted for compensation and income-based pension by researching, interpreting, and applying VA regulations, case law, policies, and procedures.
- Identified relevant legal issues, weighed the probative value of medical and lay evidence, and composed legal decisions that fully discussed the factual and regulatory basis in plain language.

Social Security Administration

Senior Case Assistant (2010-2011) *Livonia, MI*

- Drafted administrative dismissals and provided support to the Chief Administrative Law Judge by reviewing cases for issues such as substantial gainful activity and violent tendencies.
- Applied and interpreted laws, regulations, and written guidelines when processing appeals cases for individuals who were initially denied Social Security Disability or Supplemental Security Income in prototype states such as Michigan.

Legal Aid

Legal Extern (Summer 2007) *Ann Arbor, MI*

- Successfully represented indigent clients facing possible eviction in court.
- Advocated for clients at formal administrative hearings regarding their continued Section 8 eligibility.

Legal Extern (Summer 2008) *Pittsburgh, PA*

- Provided landlord/tenant advice to low-income clients via the Neighborhood Legal Services hotline.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

- *Insights into Practicing Law*, Panelist, I Am Ready Program, Champaign, IL (February 2024, 2025, & 2026).

- *Navigating the Complexities of the Clinical Teaching Market*, Panelist, Association of American Law Schools Clinical Conference, Various Locations (April 2023, May 2024, April 2025, May 2026).
- *Public Interest Work Can Change the World*, Speaker, Federalist Society at UIUC College of Law, Champaign, IL (October 2023).
- UIUC College of Law Racial Justice Practicum, Guest Lecturer, *A Past Due Debt: Reparations for Black Veterans*, Champaign, IL (May 2023).
- *12 Women Who Changed the World: Untold Stories*, Presenter, Women & Gender in Global Prospectives and the Humanities Research Institute, Champaign, IL (March 2023).
- Veterans Legal Clinics Working Group Co-Facilitator, Association of American Law Schools Clinical Conference (May 2021).
- Veterans Legal Clinics Working Group Facilitator, Association of American Law Schools Clinical Conference (July 2020).
- Co-Presenters Gautam Hans and Katie Ladewski, *Cross-Clinic Collaboration: Building Community in Different Practices*, Midwest Clinical Conference, Ann Arbor, MI (October 2019).
- *Courts as Forces to Eradicate or Perpetuate Vulnerability*, Speaker, International Society of Family Law Conference, Chicago, Illinois (June 2019).
- *Preparing Students to be Interdisciplinary Collaborators for Change*, Association of American Law Schools Clinical Conference, San Francisco, California (May 2019).
- UIUC School of Social Work Course, SOCW 321: Social Entrepreneurship and Social Change, Guest Lecturer, *Veterans Legal Needs*, Champaign, IL (October 2018).
- *Strategic Planning for New Clinics*, Midwest Clinical Conference, Notre Dame, IN (October 2018).
- Co-presenters Kimberly Thomas, and Alicia Alvarez, *Teaching to the Times*, Midwest Clinical Conference, Tulsa, Oklahoma 2016. (October 2016).
- *University of Michigan Veterans Legal Clinic - Discharge Upgrades*, Rotary Club, Ann Arbor Michigan (July 2016).

MEDIA

- *Featured in,* Cumpston, Cope, "Catch the Beat from Market Street," *WEFT 90.1 FM*, May 1, 2024.
- *Featured in*, Timmins, Mary, InClass Law | Veterans' Advocate, *Illinois Alumni,* Spring 2021.
- *Featured in*, Toledo, Adalberto, "One-on-One | UI Veterans Legal Clinic director advocates for overhauling housing code," *The News-Gazette*, May 6, 2019.

PUBLICATIONS

Articles

- Curtis, Yulanda. "Bringing back Department of War name is a messaging miss." *Stars and Stripes*. 23 Sept. 2025. Op-Ed.
- Curtis, Yulanda. "Is the War on Iran Unlawful and Unfair To U.S. Troops?" *The Fulcrum*. 15 Mar. 2026. Op-Ed.
- *VA Education Benefits,* The Legal Pad*,* January 2015, pp. 19-20.

Book Chapters

- Co-author Angela Drake, *Veterans' Appeals*, *in* Servicemember and Veterans Rights, (Brian Clauss and Stacey Rae Simcox eds., 2016).

LAW SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

- College of Law Promotion & Tenure Committee 2025-2026
- College of Law Curriculum Committee 2025-2026
- College of Law Clinician Search Committee 2025-2026
- Building Pathways for Emerging Leaders at Illinois 2024-2025
- College of Law Assessments Committee Chair 2024-2025
- University Senate Committee on Admissions Spring 2024 – Present
- University Military Education Council Fall 2021-Present
- College of Law Adjunct Hiring Committee Fall 2022-Spring 2023 and Fall 2024-Present
- College of Law Dean Search Committee 2022-2023
- College of Law Diversity Committee 2022-2023
- Association of American Law Schools Clinical Legal Clinician Crew Co-Facilitator Fall 2022-Spring 2023
- College of Law Curriculum Committee 2019-2021
- University Senate Budget Committee 2019-2021

PROFESSIONAL AWARDS AND HONORS

- University of Illinois's List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent by their Students Spring 2024
- University of Illinois's List of Teachers Ranked as Outstanding by their Students Spring 2022
- University of Illinois's List of Teachers Ranked as Outstanding by their Students Spring Fall 2021
- University of Illinois's List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent by their Students Spring 2019
- University of Illinois's List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent by their Students Fall 2018

CERTIFICATIONS

- Preparing Future Faculty Seminar, Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, University of Michigan, 2016

- Accredited Attorney, Department of Veterans Affairs, 2015
- Veterans Affairs Leadership Program, VA Learning University, Department of Veterans Affairs, 2015

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND ACTIVITIES

- National Law School Veterans Clinic Consortium Advocacy Committee
- State Bar of Illinois & State Bar of Michigan
- Association of American Law Schools
- Clinical Legal Education Association
- East Central Illinois Women Attorneys Association (ECIWAA)
- Champaign County Bar Association

EDUCATION

University of Pittsburgh - School of Law, J.D., 2009
Emphasis: Employment Discrimination
Leadership: Executive Board of Black Law Students Association
Additional: Research Paper - "Are You Man Enough for Combat?"

University of Michigan - Ross School of Business, B.B.A, 2006
Emphasis: Marketing
Leadership: President of Stockwell Residence Hall
Member of Residence Hall Association
Additional: Participant in the Michigan in Washington (MIW) internship program