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Human Rights Specialist Joins Law Faculty

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Human Rights Specialist Joins Law Faculty

Attorney Yvette Butler begins role as assistant professor in August

JANUARY 24, 2020 BY STAFF REPORT

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Yvette Butler

OXFORD, Miss. – A new faculty member with extensive experience in human rights work will join the **University of Mississippi** School of Law beginning with the fall 2020 semester.

Yvette Butler, an attorney who specializes in law related to sex work and human trafficking, sexual violence and civil rights, comes to the **law school** as an assistant professor. Butler will teach civil and political rights, critical race theory, and sexuality and law.

“We are so excited to welcome Yvette to the UM law family,” said Susan Duncan, UM law dean. “Her passion for human rights and justice, combined with her extensive experience, will make her an asset to our institution and a wonderful example for our students.”

Butler earned her Juris Doctor from George Washington University Law School in 2014 and her bachelor’s degree in philosophy from the University of Minnesota at Morris in 2011. She joins UM from the **Center for Survivor Agency and Justice** in Washington, D.C.

“Ole Miss is the whole package,” Butler said. “I’m beyond excited about the courses I’ll teach. The faculty, staff and students I’ve met are welcoming, engaging and have a great sense of humor, and the administration also seems truly supportive of intellectual freedom.

“I’m really looking forward to engaging with folks across departments on research, teaching and other creative endeavors.”

At the Center for Survivor Agency and Justice, she served as director of capacity building and systems change to address issues of economic security for survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

She also served as a policy director for the Amara Legal Center to lead legislative and policy changes in civil rights and criminal justice reform and as a law clerk for the U.S. District Court of South Dakota, where she assisted a federal magistrate judge with criminal and civil rights cases.

She has also delivered numerous presentations and published several articles on human trafficking, criminalization and civil rights.

Butler’s interest in advocating for others is more than just a passion found in practice. It’s part of her identity.

“My paternal grandparents focused on racial equity and human rights,” Butler said. “My maternal grandparents, from Trinidad and Tobago, were deeply involved in labor rights on the island and in Canada.

“I’ve been raised to think about others and the positive impact I can leave on the world. Also, I think it’s hard to grow up black – or indigenous or another minority status – in America and not be at least somewhat interested in human rights and race relations.”

Butler said her work with trafficking survivors and representation of sex workers has taken many forms, including victim witness advocate in criminal cases, divorce lawyer, policy advocacy around pre-arrest diversion, legislative advocacy to remove the ways victims of trafficking are criminalized, and civil rights cases related to profiling or improper searches of individuals accused of engaging in prostitution.

“Many of those opportunities allowed me to begin exploring the more complex reasons behind a variety of societal problems,” she said.

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Campus Briefs

Civil Engineering Professor Receives Most-Cited Paper Award

OXFORD, Miss. – Peer recognition is a rewarding experience for anyone, but University of Mississippi researcher Amir Mehrara Molan was elated when an article he co-authored recently received the Most Cited Paper Award at the 102nd Transportation Research Board meeting in the nation’s capital. The International Journal of Transportation Science and Technology presented the civil engineering

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Young Alumna Gives Back to School of Accountancy

OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy’s new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying “thank you.” “It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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Ole Miss In the News

Reuters: Keep an Eye on the Money Supply

U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to

At Ole Miss, she plans to continue her research of those societal problems while also bringing her knowledge to students in a practical way.

"I hope to bring inspiring stories and nuggets of wisdom from practice," Butler said. "Students are there to learn how to be a good lawyer, so I hope I can challenge them in the classroom and inspire them to look at the world in a different way.

"But also, law school and practice are tough. I also plan to bring lessons on self-care and self-acceptance."

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