UH law clinic students score high court immigration win

By SUSAN CARROLL
HOUSTON CHRONICLE

Just minutes after University of Houston Immigration Clinic Director Geoffrey Hoffman heard that the U.S. Supreme Court had reached a unanimous decision Monday for a long-time clinic client, he fired off an e-mail to three of his students.

"We Won!" he wrote. "Congrats!"

The victory in the case of Jose Carachuri, a legal immigrant from Mexico facing deportation for a second misdemeanor drug charge, could potentially affect thousands of legal immigrants facing deportation, Hoffman said.

SUPREME EFFORT: Law student Charlotte Simon, with Geoffrey Hoffman, director of the UH Immigration Clinic, and two other students, spent long hours on the successful brief.

The unanimous ruling was based in part on research done by three UH law students, particularly one unassuming 26-year-old, Charlotte Simon, who spent her Christmas break this year helping to build the merit brief reviewed by the nation's highest court.

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O'Melveny & Meyers LLP.

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"That was an amazing opportunity," Simon said. "The clinic has had that case since 2006, and I was just very fortunate to be here at an exciting moment in the life of that case. To me, it's really a testament to the law clinic that they give you that much responsibility and will stick with a case for that long, even when it's challenging, all the way to the Supreme Court."

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