

TERESA PHAM MESSER

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Professor of Practice & Director of the Immigration Clinic

August 2022 - Present

– University of Houston Law Center

- Manage the Immigration Clinic at the University of Houston Law Center. Supervise 2 clinic attorneys.
- Provide weekly lectures on immigration law and practice to law students at the immigration clinic.
- Oversee legal work in the immigration clinic related to cases by law students and clinic attorneys.
- Ensure that the immigration clinic complies with grant requirements.
- Engage in community outreach with non-profit legal organizations.

Immigration Attorney – Giron Kirby Law Group

August 2019 - September 2022

- Handled family and humanitarian-related immigration cases including fiancé visas, I-130 petitions, adjustment of status, green card renewals and replacements, removal of conditions, consular processing, citizenship, naturalization, asylum, DACA, T visas, U visas, VAWA, SAPCR and SIJS, TPS, re-entry permits, and advanced parole.
- Prepared waivers including I-601 hardship, I-601A provisional, and 212(i) fraud and misrepresentation.
- Handled employment-based visa applications including H-1B, TN, O-1, and employment-based green cards.
- Litigated removal cases including asylum, withholding, protection under the Convention Against Torture (CAT), cancellation of removal non-LPR, cancellation of removal LPR, cancellation of removal VAWA, and bond before the Immigration Courts in Houston, Orlando, and Los Angeles. Prepared BIA appeals, motions to reopen, motions to remand, requests for prosecutorial discretion, and stay of removal requests.
- Represented clients in immigration court hearings, asylum interviews, adjustment of status, naturalization interviews, ICE check-ins, and consular interviews.
- Supervised and trained a team of 1 associate attorney, 3 legal assistants, and 2 administrative assistants.

Immigration Attorney – Law Office of Teresa Messer

February 2015 - August 2019

- Handled family and humanitarian-related immigration cases including DACA, fiancé visa, adjustment of status, removal of conditions, green card renewals and replacements, consular processing, citizenship, naturalization, asylum, T visas, SIJS, humanitarian parole, I-130 petitions, I-601 waivers, USCIS and BIA appeals, and motions to reopen.
- Litigated removal cases including asylum, withholding of removal, protection under the Convention Against Torture (CAT), cancellation of removal, motions to reopen, and bond before the Immigration Court in Houston.
- Represented clients in immigration court hearings, asylum interviews, adjustment of status and naturalization interviews.
- Supervised 1 associate attorney.
- Published several legal articles on immigration law. Presented several CLEs on immigration law.

Immigration Attorney – Foster LLP (Formerly FosterQuan)

August 2014 - February 2015

- Advised Fortune 500 corporations on immigration matters. Ensured compliance with U.S. regulations by corporate clients. Foster LLP is one of the largest immigration law firms in the U.S.
- Supervised and trained a team of 4 legal assistants and 2 administrative assistants.
- Prepared employment-based visa applications and petitions including E-1, E-2, H-1B, TN, L1A, L1B, O-1, EOS, COS, and employment-based green card applications.

Immigration Attorney – Calehr & Associates

July 2013 - August 2014

- Litigated removal cases including asylum, withholding, CAT, cancellation of removal, and bond before Houston Immigration Court.
- Represented clients in immigration court hearings, asylum interviews, adjustment of status and naturalization interviews.
- Prepared immigration petitions and applications including asylum, T visa, H-1B, O-1, R-1, fiancé visa, adjustment of status, citizenship, naturalization, and employment-based green card applications.
- Prepared waivers including I-601 hardship, I-601A provisional, 212(i) fraud and misrepresentation, 212(h) criminal waivers.
- Prepared motions to reopen and BIA appeal briefs.

Law Clerk/Immigration Attorney – Law Office of Tejal Mehta

March 2013 - July 2013

- Advised clients on immigration matters. Prepared legal briefs and motions.
- Prepared immigration petitions and applications including H-1B, asylum, fiancé visa, adjustment of status, and naturalization.
- Represented clients in immigration court hearings, asylum interviews, adjustment of status and naturalization interviews.

Student Attorney – STCL Asylum & Human Trafficking Clinic

August 2012 - December 2012

- Completed over 200 hours of legal clinic work, including client intake and interviewing, legal research and writing, filing legal documents, trial preparation, and litigated removal defense cases at the Houston Immigration Court.
- Prepared and filed SAPCR and SIJ petitions, asylum applications, DACA applications, and employment authorization applications. Wrote asylum briefs and prepared petitions, affidavits, and client letters.

Law Clerk – Law Office of Harry Gee, Jr. & Associates

May 2012 - September 2012

- Researched and analyzed complex immigration issues.
- Wrote motions to reopen, legal briefs, and memorandum of law.

Legal Intern – Boat People SOS (BPSOS) Houston & Thailand

May 2011 - August 2011

- Interviewed asylum seekers and victims of human trafficking in Thailand. The Thailand office helps Vietnamese asylum seekers who have fled to Thailand because of religious, social and political persecution.
- Prepared asylum briefs and applications to submit to UNHCR Thailand Office.
- Held training seminar on refugee and asylum law for legal interns.

HONORS & RECOGNITIONS

- Selected for Inclusion in 2023 *Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch List*.
- Selected for Inclusion in *Texas Super Lawyers 2017-2022 Rising Stars Lists*.
- Selected for Inclusion in *Texas Lawyer Magazine's 2017 Lawyers on the Rise List*.
- Selected for Inclusion in *H Texas Magazine's 2018 Top Lawyers List*.
- Selected for Inclusion in *Houstonia Magazine's 2017 Top Lawyers List*.
- Selected by the State Bar of Texas to be a member of the 2017-2018 Class of Leadership SBOT.
- Received Diploma for completion of intensive professional training program in the art of trial skills at NITA's Advocacy in Immigration Matters.
- Received the Pro Bono Award by the Asian Pacific Interest Section of the State Bar of Texas.
- Recognized as one of the Top 20 Women Faculty of 2016 by *Lawline.com*.
- Membership in the College of the State Bar of Texas for commitment to professional education.
- Membership in Pro Bono College of the State Bar of Texas for outstanding contributions to the delivery of legal services to low-income individuals.

- Awarded the Clients' Choice Award by Avvo for outstanding client reviews.
- Received a Certificate by the Darfurian Association of Greater Houston for community service contributions to the refugee community in Houston.
- Received a Certificate by Asians Against Domestic Abuse for community service contributions to domestic violence victims.
- Received the University of Houston Council of Ethnic Organizations' Woman of the World Award.
- Inducted into the University of Houston Order of Omega National Leadership Honor Society.
- Received the University of Houston Sigma Phi Omega's Outstanding Member Award.
- Featured in the University of Houston *Lunar Cougar Blog*.
- Featured in *Voyage Houston Magazine*.
- Featured in *MyShingle.com*

ARTICLES & PUBLICATIONS

- *Fact or Fiction? Navigating the Immigration Labyrinth*, Texas Bar Journal (2019)
- *Representing the Separated*, AILA Think Immigration Blog (2018)
- *Shining a Light on Domestic Violence to Assist Immigrant Victims*, AILA Think Immigration Blog (2016)
- *Barred from Justice: The Duress Waiver to the Material Support Bar*, Houston Law Review Online (2015)
- *Examining the Merits of Texas' Syrian Refugee Injunction*, Law360 Expert Analysis (2015)
- *How the Supreme Court Decision on DOMA Impacts Binational Same-Sex Married Couples*, Houston Young Lawyers Association Pocket Parts (2013)
- *The Impact of DOMA on Immigration in Pennsylvania*, Viet Philadelphia (2013)

LECTURES & PRESENTATIONS

- Immigration Clinic, Law Course, University of Houston Law Center, Houston, TX (2022 – Present)
- *Introduction to Asylum Law*, Law Course, South Texas College of Law, Houston, TX (August 30, 2022)
- *Taking on a Pro Bono Immigration Case and Avoiding Compassion Fatigue*, 24th Annual State Bar of Texas, Asian Pacific Interest Section Conference, Austin, TX (2019)
- *DACA and Options After Graduation*, Sam Houston State University, Conroe, TX (2018)
- *Top 10 Things Every Attorney Needs to Know About U.S. Asylum Law*, Texas Young Lawyers Association, Austin, TX (2018)
- *The Trump Factor: Tackling Ethical Pitfalls and Stress in Uncharted Immigration Territory*, American Immigration Lawyers Association, Minneapolis, MN (2017)
- *Immigration Issues: How Visa Revocation & Changes in Immigration Policy May Impact Your Clients & Community*, South Asian Bar Association of Houston, Houston, TX (2017)
- *What Schools Should Know About Immigration Law*, YES Prep School, Houston, TX (2017)
- *The Basics of Affirmative Asylum*, Lawline, New York City, NY (2016)
- *Immigration Law: Handling the Most Common Types of Requests*, National Business Institute, Eau Claire, WI (2016)
- *Introduction to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Process*, Houston Northwest Bar Association, Houston, TX (2016)
- *Refugee and Asylum Law*, Katy Bar Association, Katy, TX (2016)
- *Family Based Immigration*, Law Course, Thurgood Marshall School of Law, Houston, TX (2015)
- *Preparing the DACA Application*, DACA Workshop, United We Dream, Houston, TX (2014)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Member – Association of American Law Schools (AALS) Clinician Crew	October 2022 - Present
Member – UHLC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee	September 2022 - Present
Member – American Immigration Lawyers Association	July 2013 - Present
Appointed Member – State Bar of Texas Committee on Laws Relating to Immigration	June 2016 - June 2022

and Nationality

Board Member – BPSOS-Houston	July 2015 - October 2019
Appointed Member – HBA Professionalism Committee	July 2018 - January 2019
Appointed Member – HBA CLE Committee	July 2018 - January 2019
Member – South Texas College of Law Young Alumni Council	August 2015 - August 2018
Board Member – Houston Northwest Bar Association	July 2016 - July 2018
Board Member – Asian Pacific Interest Section of the State Bar of Texas	June 2017 - June 2018
Appointed Member – AILA National Committee on VAWA, Us, Ts	June 2016 - June 2017

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Pro Bono Attorney – BakerRipley	October 2022
Pro Bono Attorney – Boat People SOS	May 2013 - Present
Pro Bono Attorney – Kids in Need of Defense	September 2015 - Present
Pro Bono Attorney – RAICES	July 2018 - October 2018
Pro Bono Attorney – YMCA International Services	August 2014 - March 2018
Pro Bono Attorney – Northwest Immigration Rights Project	September 2018 - October 2018
Pro Bono Attorney – Lawyers for Good Government	February 2017
Pro Bono Attorney – United We Dream	January 2014 - January 2015
Pro Bono Attorney – Catholic Charities	January 2014 - January 2015
Legal Research Assistant – Lawyers Against Human Trafficking	December 2014 - March 2015

BAR & COURT ADMISSIONS

State Bar of Texas – Supreme Court of Texas	May 2013
U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas	November 2015
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit	September 2018

EDUCATION

South Texas College of Law Houston, J.D.	2012
● Honors: Pro Bono Honors Program Certificate; Highest Grade in Federal Immigration Litigation & Advocacy Class; High Pass in Asylum & Human Trafficking Clinic	
University of Houston, B.A., English and Philosophy	2009
● Honors: <i>Cum Laude</i> , Dean's List for Academic Excellence	
● Activities: Co-Founder, Refugee Assistance Program of Houston; Co-Founder, STAND Anti-Genocide Coalition; Vice President, Sigma Phi Omega Asian American Sorority	