

2019 Speakers

PAUL KIRGIS

Paul F. Kirgis joined the Alexander Blewett III School of Law at the University of Montana as Dean and Professor of Law on July 1, 2015.

An authority on dispute resolution both within and outside of the traditional civil litigation paradigm, he has published widely on topics ranging from the civil jury to arbitration to negotiation pedagogy. His articles have appeared in the Harvard Negotiation Law Review, the Negotiation Journal, the Oregon Law Review, the William & Mary Law Review, the Ohio State Law Review, and the Georgia Law Review, among others. A trained mediator, he is a member of the American Law Institute and has held positions in a number of national legal organizations, including serving as Chair of the AALS Dispute Resolution Section.

Prior to joining the University of Montana, Dean Kirgis was a Professor at St. John's University School of Law in New York City, where he founded and served as Faculty Chair of the Hugh L. Carey Center for Dispute Resolution. For his work building the dispute resolution program, he was awarded the Faculty Outstanding Achievement Medal by St. John's University. He was twice voted Professor of the Year by the St. John's students.

Before entering teaching, Dean Kirgis practiced with two major law firms in Washington, D.C., where he had extensive litigation experience in areas including defamation, insurance coverage, commercial disputes, antitrust, government contracts, and tax. He received his J.D., magna cum laude, from Washington & Lee University School of Law, where he served as Editor-in-Chief of the Washington & Lee Law Review and was elected to the Order of the Coif. He received his B.A. from Colgate University.

ERIC NORD

Eric Nord works for the Crist, Krogh & Nord law firm in Billings and specializes his practice in the area of business law and litigation with a special emphasis on commercial transactions, employment law, real estate, construction law, and corporate relations. He also acts as a mediator in business matters.

Mr. Nord has been selected for inclusion in Mountain States Super Lawyers-Business/Corporate Edition for 2012-2018. Mr. Nord was selected as a "Super Lawyer" in business and corporate law. Only 5 percent of lawyers are named "Super Lawyers."

Mr. Nord is a 1988 graduate of Boston University Law School and a 1985 graduate of Carleton College. Mr. Nord is the President of the State Bar of Montana, and has been the Treasurer of the Yellowstone Area Bar Association as well as an officer and director of other non-profit boards. He has written articles and presented seminars on a variety of business-related topics.

ANTHONY JOHNSTONE

Anthony Johnstone is a Professor at the University of Montana School of Law. He teaches and writes about Federal and State Constitutional Law, Election Law, Legislation, and related subjects. Professor Johnstone has testified before the United States Senate Judiciary Committee and the Montana Legislature. Before joining the School of Law, Professor Johnstone served as the Solicitor for the State of Montana, practiced litigation as an associate at Cravath, Swaine & Moore in New York, New York, and clerked for the Honorable Sidney R. Thomas, United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. He holds a B.A. from Yale University and a J.D. with honors from the University of Chicago Law School.

MAYLINN SMITH

Maylinn Smith is an Adjunct Professor, Clinical Supervisor and Co-Director of the Margery Hunter Brown Indian Law Clinic at the University of Montana, Alexander Blewett III School of Law and acting Director to the UMLS Clinical Program. Over the last two decades she has supervised third year law students in the Indian Law Clinic on a variety of projects which have assisted tribal governments, organizations and individuals in addressing a variety of Indian law issues. In addition to handling various types of litigation involving Indian issues in tribal, state or federal courts, the Indian Law Clinic drafts tribal codes; trains tribal judges and staff, federal agencies and Indian organizations on legal requirements and procedures; provides assistance with tribal economic development; activity is involved in Indian Child Welfare Act matters and comments on legislation at the tribal, state and federal level. She has taught numerous courses dealing with Indian issues and frequently provides CLE presentations on Indian issues. Her legal work experience includes work as an appellate judge for Blackfeet, Fort Peck, Crow and the Southwest Intertribal Court of Appeals, Chief Judge of the Southern Ute Indian Tribal Court, legal advisor for the Salish & Kootenai Tribal Court and private practice.

K. VIRGINIA (“GINGER”) ALDRICH

Ms. Aldrich grew up in Billings, and she graduated magna cum laude from Bryn Mawr College in 2001 with a bachelor's degree in international relations. Ginger graduated from the University of Montana law school with honors in 2009 and earned a master of philosophy from the University of Montana in 2010. Before joining the Legislature as a staff attorney, Ms. Aldrich served as a Foreign Service Officer, and her portfolio included rule of law projects and capacity-building assistance for Afghan provincial councils. During the legislative session, Ms. Aldrich staffs the Senate State Administration and House Local Government committees. During the legislative interim, Ms. Aldrich provides legal assistance to the State Administration and Veterans' Affairs Interim Committee and the Local Government Interim Committee. Ms. Aldrich is a member of the State Bar of Montana and the District of Columbia Bar.

JUSTICE JIM RICE

Jim grew up in Glasgow, Montana, graduated from MSU-Bozeman in 1979 with a degree in political science, and from the UM School of Law in 1982. He was a public defender for Lewis and Clark County for four years, and from 1985 to 2001, was a partner in the law firm of Jackson & Rice in Helena. He was elected to three terms in the Montana House of Representatives, and served as House Majority Whip in the 1993 session. In March 2001, he was appointed Justice of the Montana Supreme Court by Gov. Judy Martz, and was confirmed by a unanimous vote of the State Senate. He was elected to an 8-year term on the Court in 2006, and reelected in 2014. He is married to Norine Nelson of Hinsdale, Montana, and they have three daughters and seven grandchildren.

JON BENNION

Jon is a native of Billings. He earned his undergraduate degree in political science in 2000 and a law degree in 2005 from the University of Montana in Missoula. In 2004, he authored *Big Sky Politics*, a book about the history of campaigns and elections in modern Montana. In 2006, Jon joined the Montana Chamber of Commerce staff as Government Relations Director, where he also served as in-house counsel. He served from 2009 - 2013 on the Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission. Jon has been a member of Attorney General Fox's executive team since he was elected to office in November 2012. In addition to his duties as Chief Deputy Attorney General, Jon is the administrator of the Legal Services Division at the Montana Department of Justice. He plays an integral role in the Attorney General's Aid Montana initiative, which aims to comprehensively address Montana's substance abuse problem. Jon and his wife, Jessi, are the proud parents of a son, Jack.

MIKE MANNON

Mike Manion is the Chief Legal Counsel, Deputy Director and Chief Labor Negotiator for the Department of Administration. He has been a State employee for 10 years. Before state employment, he was a partner with the Corette, Pohlman & Kebe law firm in Butte and was a lawyer for the Montana Power Company for 18 years. Mike was graduated from Carroll College in 1980 and Notre Dame law school in 1983.

