

The New Hires - 2024



SANTA CLARA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

countyda.sccgov.org



Ryba Bhullar graduated from Santa Clara University in 2019. Ms. Bhullar received her law degree from the Santa Clara University School of Law in 2023. While there, she was the co-president of the First-Generation Law Student Association, co-external vice president of the South Asian Law Student Association, an Academic Success fellow, and a Criminal Law Department research assistant. Ms. Bhullar received the Pro Bono Graduating Student of the Year, Dean’s Social Justice, Gold Pro Bono, Silver Pro Bono, and Bronze Pro Bono awards for completing more than 700 pro bono hours during law school.

Ms. Bhullar began her career at this Office in 2021 as a 1L law clerk. She remained in the Office as a bar certified law clerk through her 2L year. In summer 2022, she was a 2L honors law clerk where she successfully conducted a court trial for an out-on-bail allegation for a homicide case. In fall 2022, she was a bar certified law clerk and then an honors post bar law clerk the next year. As an intern, Ms. Bhullar conducted more than 70 court hearings including: misdemeanor arraignments, preliminary hearings, misdemeanor motions, and felony motions.

In 2020, she volunteered as a child advocate for the Young Center for Immigrant Children’s Rights. From 2021 to 2022, Ms. Bhullar was a clinical student for the Northern California Innocence Project where she worked on a wrongful incarceration case.

Ms. Bhullar’s parents emigrated from Punjab, India and settled in south San Jose. She credits her parents for instilling in her the values of perseverance and standing up for what is right. As a practicing Sikh, she aspires to contribute to the betterment of society – one of the main values of her religion. Now, she is the first in her family to go to college, become an attorney, and serve her community as a prosecutor.

She speaks Punjabi, Hindi, and Spanish.

“Every time I’m in court, I realize how much I love being here,” Ms. Bhullar said. “It doesn’t feel to me like a job, but a privilege to stand up for victims.”

When not in court, Ms. Bhullar likes to spend time with her family, read, and watch reality TV.



Ian Buckman graduated from Reed College in Portland, OR in 2018. He received his law degree from the University of California, Berkeley School of Law in 2023. While there, he received the Berkeley Law Dean's Fellowship and participated in moot court, where he was the 2022 Regional Advocacy Award recipient. The following year, he was the 2023 McBaine Moot Court Competition Quarterfinalist, Best Brief for the Respondent. Mr. Buckman was a student leader for the Homelessness Service Project, the managing editor for the Berkeley Journal of Criminal Law in 2021, and the senior submissions editor in 2022.

Mr. Buckman began his career at this Office as a certified law clerk in the 2L Honors Program in 2022 – a homecoming for the Leland High graduate and the culmination of a dinner he had with a librarian years before.

In 2023, Mr. Buckman was a law clerk for the Office of the U.S. Attorney, Northern District of California. In 2022, he was a certified law clerk for the Contra Costa County District Attorney's Domestic Violence Unit. In 2021, he was a certified litigation intern for the City of San Jose's Office of the City Attorney.

In 2018, he was a legal assistant at a boutique commercial litigation firm in Palo Alto. One day, a new client walked in. They were a victim of a sophisticated phone scam, but unlike the firm's usual clients, they were a first-generation immigrant. Unfortunately, pursuing their case provided little benefit for the firm and civil law provided paltry remedies. No suit was filed.

"The failure of this case deeply affected me. I decided to spend my career helping people like them," Ian said. "I could think of no better place to do it than in my home county."

The dream of being a lawyer had begun at Reed College library when the head librarian invited him home for supper. There, he and his husband – a high ranking state counsel – were impressed by the bookish, talkative student. They suggested the law. At their urging, Mr. Buckman went to federal court to watch a criminal calendar.

Afterward he rode the elevator resisting the temptation to tell the prosecutor how much he wanted to be like her. Later, Mr. Buckman watched DDAs Henry Kim, Nick Chase, Aidan Welsh, and Chris Paynter, handle themselves in court with the same cool grace and professionalism. A defendant even shook Mr. Paynter's hand afterwards. Mr. Buckman was star struck.

Mr. Buckman sometimes drives up to Berkeley to play Dungeons & Dragons with some old pals. Years after the break-ups of his bands "Honda Cynic" and "The Dead Pelicans," he still likes to play guitar and keyboards.



Alexis Hatcher graduated cum laude from San Jose State University in 2019. While there, Ms. Hatcher was a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, and Pi Sigma Alpha political science honor society. She was also awarded with Phi Kappa Phi honors and was a Dean's Scholar. Ms. Hatcher received her law degree from the Santa Clara University School of Law in 2022. During her time at Santa Clara University, she was a recipient of the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship, the Dean's Leadership Award and the CALI Excellence for the Future Award in Advocacy. She was also the co-president of the Black Law Students Association, a member of the International Human Rights Clinic, and a member of the Honors Moot Court Internal and the Trial Team, which took first place at the San Francisco Trial Lawyers Association 2021 Mock Trial competition.

Ms. Hatcher started her career with this Office as a law clerk in 2021. She came back as an honors post bar law clerk in 2022, where she conducted misdemeanor motion hearings and preliminary hearings. She returned as a post bar law clerk in the spring of 2023, assisting the Sexual Assault Unit with pre-trial motions and hearings. She served as a provisional deputy district attorney later that summer.

Her legal career was sparked in part by a big family committed to giving back to the community – through voter drives and union participation; and to honor the legacy of her grandmother, a Las Vegas defense attorney.

"Some people think that people of color are geared toward a defense prospective," Ms. Hatcher said. "I hope I am changing that narrative. I want to make decisions that directly affect the victims of crime in my community."

Ms. Hatcher was a legal intern with the San Francisco District Attorney's Office in 2020.

From 2017 to 2019, Ms. Hatcher worked for the Silicon Valley Leadership Group as a Government Relations Coordinator. There, she worked alongside California politicians and Silicon Valley CEOs to advocate for public policy that would strengthen the Bay Area. This included visits to the Capitol in Sacramento and Washington, D.C.



Lyons George graduated from the University of Maryland, in College Park in 2011. During Mr. George's first year in law school in 2017 at the University of California, College of the Law, San Francisco he ranked first in his class. He transferred and then graduated from Stanford Law School in 2020. While there, he received the Gunther Prize for Outstanding Performance (Corporations) and joined the Stanford Law & Policy Review, Trial Advocacy, and was a teaching assistant at the Graduate School of Business.

Mr. George comes to this Office from Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, LLP., in San Francisco. He was hired as a white collar and litigation associate in 2022. As an associate, Mr. George represented an individual client in parallel DOJ/SEC insider trading investigations. He also defended corporate and municipal clients in various white collar and civil litigation matters. He also led settlement discussions with the DOJ for a pro bono client in an immigration case.

In 2020, Mr. George was a judicial law clerk for the Chief U.S. District Court Judge for the Northern District of California, the Hon. Richard Seeborg. Earlier that same year, he was a legal intern for the Yosemite Park Prosecutor's Office in Yosemite Valley prosecuting misdemeanor cases such as the self-proclaimed Kung Fu Master, who was actually a middle-aged out of shape guy picking drunken fights with rock climbers. These weren't murder cases, but the feeling of arguing in court and advocating for a community stayed with him.

In 2019, Mr. George was a summer associate for O'Melveny & Myers LLP., in San Francisco. In 2016, he was a product developer/marketer for The Dig.In Agency. In 2012, he was a securities analyst and product developer for The Motley Fool.

"I think he's going to be a tremendous addition to the county," said DDA Jonathan Beardsley, who has served as a mentor for Mr. George. "He's whip smart, is thoughtful and conscientious, and I think will be a dedicated public servant. It's no surprise he comes so highly recommended by the federal judge for whom he clerked."

As a first-generation legal professional from a military family, Mr. George was drawn to prosecutorial work by the opportunity to serve his community. Through his work for the Office, he hopes to live up to the example set by his younger sister, a lieutenant commander in the United States Navy.

When he is not advocating in court, Mr. George loves hiking in the Sierra Nevadas, playing sports, and reading fiction. He credits his career in the law to his five siblings, who gave him decades of practice at oral argument before he ever stepped foot in a courtroom.



Hailey Guinn was the salutatorian of the 2020 graduating class at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, NY. Ms. Guinn volunteered as a tutor for Marist College’s Department of Accommodations and Accessibility. She received her law degree from the University of California, Berkeley School of Law in 2023. While there, she was the web editor for the Berkeley Journal of Criminal Law and the signatory for the Berkeley Animal Law Society. She was awarded the Jurisprudence Award for Advanced Criminal Trial Practice and Practical Legal Ethics, and the Prosser Prize for Torts, Animal Law, and Income Tax Law. Ms. Guinn joined the Order of the Coif after graduation.

Ms. Guinn began her career at this Office in 2021 as a 1L law clerk. She returned the following year as a 2L honors law clerk. She has come the long way around to a job her parents figured she was destined for since she broke her arm as a child.

Afraid of needles, Ms. Guinn fought tooth and nail when the doctors tried to give her a shot when she was six-years-old. She was shouting that they didn’t have the right to do this to her. It was her body. She put up such a fuss that the hospital sent a lawyer to make sure there wasn’t an issue.

“I still feel fiercely protective of violations of the rights of people and their safety,” Ms. Guinn said. She has been a victim of violent crime as well and it further forged in her an understanding that a case is a person’s life to them.

In 2022, Ms. Guinn was a law clerk for the Alameda Superior Court of California, in Hayward under the Hon. Judge Keith Fong. From 2020 to 2022, she was a student researcher and then a student leader for the Berkeley Law Animal and Advocacy Project. In 2016, she worked for the Marist College Student Nighttime Auxiliary Patrol. Over the next four years, she worked as a dispatcher and then as a coordinator where she managed the student-run campus security division with over 40 employees.

In 2019, Ms. Guinn interned for the U.S. Marshals Service, Criminal Division, in Brooklyn, NY. Earlier that same year, she interned at the Dutchess County District Attorney’s Office in Poughkeepsie.

Ms. Guinn recalls her experience at this Office as a 1L law clerk and how it affirmed her goal to work for the People of Santa Clara County. After observing a sentencing hearing where DDA O’Bryan Kenney asked for a life sentence, he brought the interns into his office to explain the circumstances that had informed his position.

“He wanted to make sure that we understood that this Office does not ask for harsh sentences just because it can. This showed me that as a Santa Clara County prosecutor, I could serve and protect the People under the umbrella of an Office that values fairness and progress above all else.”

Ms. Guinn is interested in figure skating, amigurumi crochet, and perfecting her chocolate chip cookie recipe.



Stephen Meyer graduated cum laude from Santa Clara University in 1995. He graduated magna cum laude from the Brooklyn Law School, NY, in 2002. While there, he was a Richardson Scholar and Dean Merit Scholar, and a recipient of the CALI Excellence for the Future Award in Legal Writing I and Legal Writing II. He was an editor for the Brooklyn Law School Journal of Law & Policy and served as vice president of the Moot Court Board. He also won first place in the August A. Rendigs, Jr. National Products Liability Moot Court Competition.

Mr. Meyer comes to our Office after more than 16 years as a federal prosecutor, specializing in gangs. He served for more than a decade as an assistant U.S. attorney with the Criminal Division of the United States Attorney's Office, Northern District of California. Since 2012, he served as counsel in six jury trials, including two lengthy RICO cases involving murder, attempted murder, and other violent crimes. Mr. Meyer helped investigate, charge, and resolve gang-related cases in San Jose, San Francisco, Oakland, South San Francisco, Salinas, and Santa Cruz. He also served as a supervisor for the Organized Crime Strike Force for nearly four years, which gave him great insight into prosecuting gang crimes.

Mr. Meyer was previously an assistant U.S. attorney with the Criminal Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York in Brooklyn from 2007 to 2012. While there, he served as counsel in seven federal jury trials, including an internet pharmacy trial, a mortgage fraud trial where one of the defendants was an attorney, and a drug robbery crew trial where one of the non-trial defendants was a police officer.

From 2003 to 2007, Mr. Meyer was an associate in the litigation department at Blank Rome LLP, in Manhattan, where he represented individuals and corporate clients in civil litigation and white-collar criminal defense. He was previously a summer associate there in 2001 while still attending law school.

Before attending law school, Mr. Meyer previously worked as an executive trainee, sales manager, and department manager at the Macy's at Valley Fair Mall from 1995 to 1999.

An east San Jose native, Mr. Meyer attended San Jose public schools, including Sylvandale Middle School and Andrew P. Hill High School.

"It's been a long road, coming back to Santa Clara County. Because the District Attorney's Office does a larger volume of criminal cases than federal prosecutors, I believe I can have a greater impact on reducing crime in the community in which I live."



Olivia Salguero graduated magna cum laude from Gonzaga University, in Spokane, WA in 2019. While there, she was awarded the Outstanding Senior Student Award in Criminal Justice. She obtained her law degree from the Santa Clara University School of Law in 2023, where she was a Dean’s Fellow Scholarship recipient. In addition, she earned the CALI Excellence for the Future Awards in Criminal Procedure for Adjudication, Appellate Advocacy, Professional Responsibility, and received the Witkin Award for Academic Excellence in Appellate Advocacy. She served on the boards of the Trial Team, Latinx Law Student Association, Criminal Law Society, and Black Law Student Association. She was also a finalist in the 2021 Galloway Moot Court and a semi-finalist in the 2023 Texas Young Lawyers Moot Court competitions.

Ms. Salguero’s career will almost – but not quite – overlap with her mother’s. Desiree Salguero, a former San Jose police officer, just retired as one of our investigators. Her daughter began her legal career at this Office as an undergraduate student intern in 2017 and 2018. In 2021, she rejoined as a summer law clerk. She returned the following year in spring and summer as a 2L law clerk. In 2023, she was a post bar law clerk and composed and argued motions as part of the Central Misdemeanor and Felony units.

As an undergraduate intern, Ms. Salguero sat in with then-DDA Daniel Kassabian as he prepared a victim for trial.

“For the victim, she felt like everybody thought she was wasting her time trying to hold the defendant accountable. We were giving her a voice,” she said. “That’s what I want to do for the rest of my life: give victims a voice in the courtroom.”

Ms. Salguero is a south San Jose native, a graduate of Notre Dame High School, and the first in her family to go to college.

Ms. Salguero regularly volunteers with the Shop with a Cop Foundation Silicon Valley. She also volunteered with this Office’s Parent Project, where she helped organize graduation ceremonies for the 12-week diversion program, as well as the annual holiday party.

She loves to bake and is tackling a “hummingbird cake” – which involves pineapple, walnuts, bananas, pecans, and a cream cheese frosting.



Bridget Spencer graduated from the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, WA in 2016. While there, she was a member of the Phi Eta Sigma and Psi Chi honor societies and received a President's Scholarship. Ms. Spencer received her law degree from the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law in 2020. She was a Mexican American Bar Foundation Scholar and Hispanic Scholarship Foundation Scholar. She was the chief managing editor of the Chicax Latinx Law Review and co-chair of the Latinx Law Student Association.

Ms. Spencer comes to this Office after serving as a Deputy City Attorney with the City Attorney's Office of San Jose. During her two years there, Ms. Spencer represented the City of San Jose in criminal prosecution matters. She received the San Jose Special Merit Award for her close collaboration with the San Jose Police Department, including on multi-defendant investigations, deterrence and enforcement efforts related to dangerous car gatherings known as "sideshows."

The first lawyer in her working-class Latino family, she has seen crime from many different sides. As a teen, her family homes in Tacoma and Albuquerque, NM, were burglarized with her young siblings inside. Her sister called her before she thought to call police.

Victim advocacy, along with her life experiences, was instrumental to her decision to pursue prosecutorial work and find ways to support victims.

Ms. Spencer served as a graduate law clerk with the Alameda County Office of the County Counsel from 2020 to 2021.

While in law school, Ms. Spencer served as a law clerk at Gunn Coble LLP, in 2020, where she supported plaintiff-side employment class action litigation. In 2019, Ms. Spencer was an extern with the United States Attorney's Office, Central District of California's Criminal Division in Los Angeles, where she drafted arguments to criminal motions and asset forfeiture claims. She also conducted statutory analysis in prosecution of American citizens who commit sexual crimes against children abroad.

During the summer of 2019, Ms. Spencer was a certified law clerk with the California Attorney General's Office in the Appeals, Writs and Trials Section, where she presented an oral argument before the California Court of Appeals and worked on respondent briefs.

In 2018, Ms. Spencer was a summer associate at the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking. While there, she interviewed clients and assisted them with applications for visas, declarations, and certification letters, to get their criminal charges dismissed. She also assisted with emergency support to survivors fleeing human trafficking.

Ms. Spencer enjoys traveling, hiking, and figuring out jigsaw puzzles and escape rooms.



Jaime Stringfield graduated from the University of California, Davis, in 1991. She received her law degree from the Willamette University School of Law in Salem, OR in 1995. In 2010, Ms. Stringfield went back to school to obtain a multi-subject (elementary) education certificate through San Jose State University.

Ms. Stringfield is restarting a career here as a prosecutor advocating for children after a dozen interim years as an elementary schoolteacher. She began her career at this Office in 1998 as a deputy district attorney. Over the next 12 years she was assigned to the Family Violence, Physical Abuse of Children & Elderly, and Child Sexual Assault teams – where she was specially assigned to a grant position designated to prosecute forcible sexual assaults of children by family members.

Then she switched careers – and began advocating for children in the classroom. After Ms. Stringfield received her teaching credentials in 2011, she worked for school districts in Santa Clara and San Diego counties.

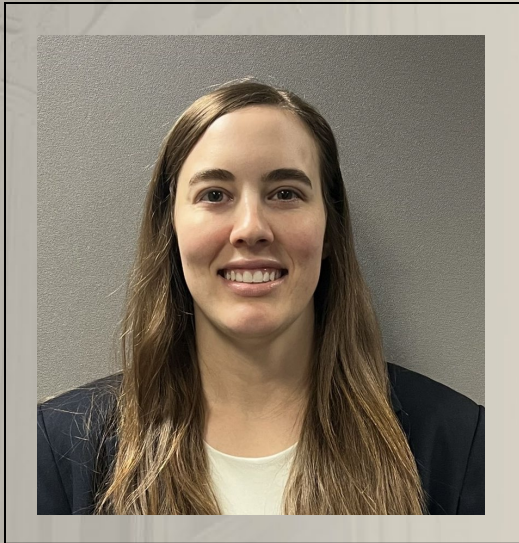
Both her legal and scholastic careers have inspirations from her family: her grandfather – Albert Bagshaw – was the district attorney for Marin from 1935 to 1950. She remembers him regaling her family with amazing legal tales at the Thanksgiving dinner table. Her parents were both high school teachers. But it was her work as a prosecutor, and having a way with traumatized children, that sparked her post-legal career as a teacher of young kids.

“I saw this change when these young victims did something they did not think they could do: testifying in court about these terrible things. Then, out of that dark heavy world, I moved into education and got to teach these little littles who were blown away because I’d seen a real shark.” She saw the shark at the Monterey Bay Aquarium and over half her students had never even been to the ocean.

In 1995, Ms. Stringfield was a volunteer law student for the Santa Cruz County District Attorney’s Office. Later that year, they hired Stringfield as an assistant district attorney. In 1989, Ms. Stringfield was an undergraduate intern coordinator for the Sacramento County District Attorney’s Office.

Ms. Stringfield’s sense of being of service to others flows into her volunteer work. In 2021, she volunteered at Monarch Services in Santa Cruz. While there, she supported and collaborated with Monarch’s attorney regarding legal services to family violence survivors and other recipients, not unlike our Family Justice Centers.

When Ms. Stringfield isn’t prosecuting cases, she enjoys surfing, running, swimming, hiking, mountaineering, alpine skiing, backcountry skiing, snowshoeing, stand-up paddle boarding, and traveling. She has visited Australia, New Zealand, Rwanda, Kenya, China, Russia, Costa Rica, and Switzerland.



Rachel Westcoat graduated magna cum laude from Bristol Community College in Fall River, MA, in 2014. She transferred to Bridgewater State University, and graduated magna cum laude in 2015. Ms. Westcoat received her law degree from Santa Clara University School of Law in 2023. While there, she was an Academic Success Program fellow, a moot court internal quarterfinalist in 2022, and later that same year a moot court board member.

Ms. Westcoat began her career at this Office as a law clerk in 2021. She returned the following year as a 2L law clerk.

The New England fishing city native who dreamed of being a cop came here after a career in the military, serving in the Coast Guard offshore of ports in Seattle, Hawaii, and in the Bering Sea.

She joined the Coast Guard in 2016 and eventually became a victim advocate for women who had been sexually assaulted in the service. She supported a woman who had been sexually battered by an officer during a leave on a small Alaskan Island. Ms. Westcoat took the initiative to pioneer a Women's Leadership Program on the U.S. Cutter John Midgett. This program not only established a direct line of communication to the chain of command for female personnel, enabling them to state their concerns, but it also fostered an environment that encouraged and valued their contributions. Simultaneously, Ms. Westcoat also served as co-chair of the Leadership and Diversity Council, a role that ensured all minority voices were heard.

"My time in the military provided me with invaluable lessons in bridging gaps and amplifying marginalized voices," she said. "I just want to help people."

That impulse led her to law school and then, to this Office.

When she isn't prosecuting cases, Ms. Westcoat enjoys spending time with her husband and their dog, Bear.