

NEVADA TRAILBLAZERS

Meet Angela Cook:

**A Fierce Advocate
for Children Inside –
and Outside –
the Courtroom**



BY MARISA RODRIGUEZ (CITY OF NORTH LAS VEGAS), RYAN GORMLEY (WEINBERG, WHEELER, HUDGINS, GUNN & DIAL, LLC), AND MARY BACON (SPENCER FANE LLP)

Angela M. Cook provides a voice for a segment of the population that too often goes unheard. As an attorney with Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada’s (LACSN) Children’s Attorneys Project, Cook represents children, many of whom have suffered abuse and neglect, through one of the most challenging periods of their lives. She provides holistic representation, advocating for the child’s interest both in and outside of the courtroom. And despite the emotional toll imposed and dedication required by such work, Cook, who represents upwards of 100 clients at any given time, is quick to note that “kids are the best clients.”

Cook’s zeal for her work is known throughout the community. Dr. M. Alexis Kennedy, associate professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), who studies child trauma, said, “The children that Angela represents have seen many adults disappoint them, but they intuitively trust Angela to be in their corner. She’s a friendly but fierce advocate.”

Cook’s enthusiasm for protecting the most vulnerable in society is not new. As the daughter of two U.S. Army military police officers, a sense of duty to serve and protect was instilled in her early. She spent her childhood on military bases and in classrooms across the world, including Germany, Russia, Alabama and California, before landing in Las Vegas in the ninth grade.

Her passion led her to pursue and obtain a bachelor’s and master’s degree in criminal justice from her adopted hometown university, UNLV. In her master’s program, Cook’s thesis examined stalking and intimate partner violence—crimes that are often overlooked and under-tracked. Based on her research, Cook worked with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department to implement a method to better track and account for such crimes in related investigations.

Given her education and background, Cook envisioned a career in law enforcement. Following an internship at the U.S. Probation Office, she decided to become a juvenile probation officer. She looked forward to the challenge of helping children get back on the right path. However, a hiring freeze forced Cook to revisit her goals.

She chose to give law school a try, electing to stay in Las Vegas and attend the William S. Boyd School of Law.

Cook excelled in law school. Upon graduation, she received the prestigious Dean’s Award for her contributions to the law school, including serving as

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

Meet Angela Cook

business editor of the UNLV Gaming Law Journal, a member of the Society of Advocates, president of the Minority Law Student Association, vice president of the Black Law Student Association, a student attorney in the Thomas & Mack Legal Clinic's Family Justice Clinic, a legal extern with LACSN's Domestic Violence Unit, a judicial extern to Justice Michael L. Douglas of the Nevada Supreme Court and a member of Boyd's nationally recognized Thurgood Marshall Mock Trial Competition team.

These accomplishments are all the more impressive considering that throughout law school, Cook worked full-time at the airport as a passenger service agent and held various part-time jobs as well.

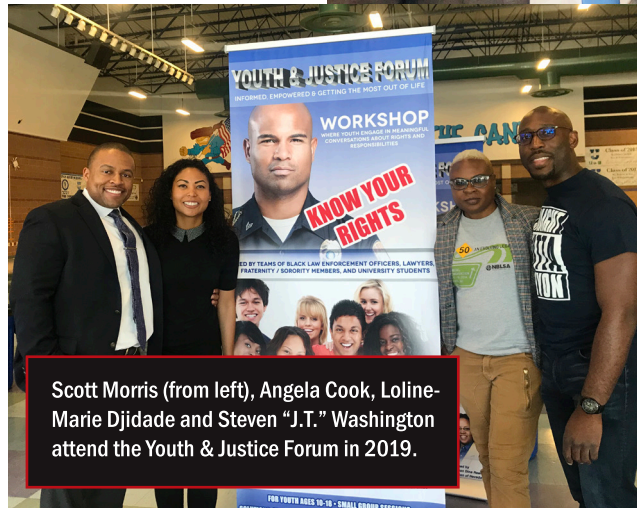
Following law school, Cook clerked for a family court judge before joining LACSN. Not accustomed to having just one job, Cook is also an adjunct faculty lecturer in UNLV's Criminal Justice Department and served as an adjunct faculty supervisor with Boyd School of Law's Externship Program.

Despite her demanding career, Cook is also deeply involved in community service. She is a pillar of the Las Vegas Chapter of the National Bar Association, where she serves as recording secretary, instructor at the annual Youth Justice Forum and member of the Racial Justice Committee. She also serves as the LACSN's liaison to the LGBTQ+ Youth in Out-of-Home Placements Work Group. She has held multiple leadership positions with the Young Lawyers Section of the State Bar of Nevada, ranging from the committee chair for Project Salute (which assists veterans) to serving as the Southern District Representative of Law Related Education, where she helped oversee the Goldilocks Program (which teaches students about the legal system), and the Roger Foley Essay and Poster Competition (which provides students an opportunity to learn about the legal system).

In her limited free time, Cook enjoys spending time with her family and friends, reading biographies, watching movies, and lending her voice to a different cause—karaoke. Her go-to songs include classics “Don't Stop Believin'” and “Stand by Me.”



Members of the State Bar of Nevada's Young Lawyers Section - Jordan Davis (from left), Angela Cook and Karl Riley - attended the American Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section Conference in Vancouver, California, in 2018.



Scott Morris (from left), Angela Cook, Loline-Marie Djidade and Steven "J.T." Washington attend the Youth & Justice Forum in 2019.



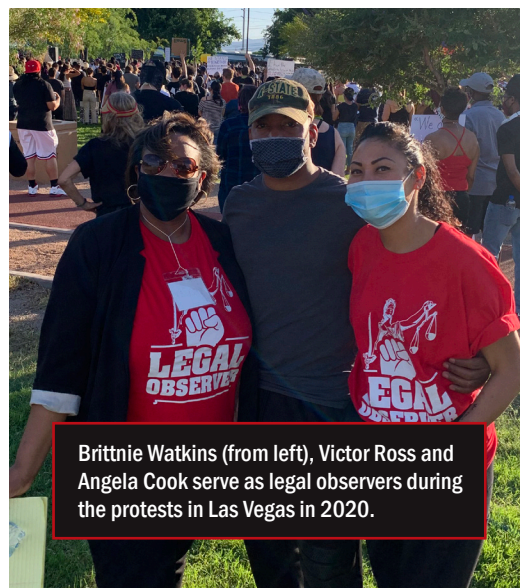
Angela Cook addresses new attorneys during the State Bar of Nevada's swearing-in ceremony in 2019.



LaTosha Kelly (from left), Angela Cook, Justin Stafford, Amy Honodel and Danyell Cadel are Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada's Children Attorneys Project Team East.



Angela Cook attends the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada's company picnic with her godchildren Brielle Moffett and Brevyn Moffett in 2019.



Brittanie Watkins (from left), Victor Ross and Angela Cook serve as legal observers during the protests in Las Vegas in 2020.

