



Veronica Beltran, J.D.

Veronica Beltran was born and raised in Holland, MI. She is a graduate of the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law.

Her family's parish membership at St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church dates back to the 1970's. Her maternal grandparents, from Guanajuato, Mexico, settled in Holland after years of migrant farm work across the country. Her father arrived in the 1980's to Holland from Sinaloa, Mexico.

Veronica learned about service to her community, especially the immigrant community, thru the advocacy work her parents did thru St. Francis de Sales Parish & the greater Holland community. From an early age she knew she wanted to be an attorney. Her passion for advocacy work started at an early age when her father took her to immigration reform marches in Grand Rapids, MI. Her advocacy work in Western Michigan ranged from organizing a Dream Act Forum in Holland to founding an immigration advocacy organization at Grand Valley State University. After graduating from GVSU, Veronica moved to Eastern Michigan to pursue her dream of becoming an attorney. Her advocacy work continued through immigrant communities in Flint & the greater Detroit area.

Beltran has incorporated into her legal work the Jesuit & Mercy values she learned from her legal education at UD Mercy. She was her Law School class ***Vivere Ex Missione*** recipient which is presented each year during commencement exercises to graduating students who best exemplify the mission of Detroit Mercy.

As a staff member at Detroit Mercy Law's Immigration Law Clinic, Beltran supports the professors and students as they help people seeking asylum in the United States. Her work with immigrants continued as an Executive Board member of the Hispanic & Latino Law Student Association. She also volunteered and recruited other students to volunteer at immigrant and refugee legal clinics in Detroit. Beltran calls out and stands up to injustice. She volunteered her time to help clients at the expungement clinic hosted at the Michigan Supreme Court and Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Court.



DEACON TOM BOUSAMRA

Tom is an ordained Deacon in the Catholic Church (St. Francis Catholic Parish in Traverse City), and is assigned by the Bishop of Gaylord to Jail Ministry NW Vicariate. He is involved in a variety of Ministries: Chair of the Family Partnership Grand Traverse (adult to adult mentoring project to stabilize folks helping them to be independent), orphan ministry, coordination of food pantry, and

other ministries.

Recently (Dec. 7, 2020), The City of Traverse City's Human Rights Commission honored Tom as the 2020 Sara Hardy Humanitarian Award during the City Commission meeting. He is the President of "Before, During, and After Incarceration" (BDAI). He's served as a volunteer Catholic chaplain at the Grand Traverse County Jail for the past thirty-four years. He's a current member of the Family Partnership of Grand Traverse, a Deacon at St. Francis Catholic Church, and past chair of the St. Francis Peace and Justice Commission.

Tom served as a secondary English teacher for forty years in the Traverse City Area Public Schools (English, Speech, Journalism, Debate). He also coached track.

Bousamra and his colleagues in BDAI help prepare those incarcerated for re-entry into the community through Life Skills Classes, Coaching/Mentoring programs, and Family Support Dinners. They have refurbished the jail library with new books and supported a clothing closet for those leaving incarceration. They have also advocated for improved mental health services, enrichment classes, and collaboration with other community organizations. Said one nominator, "Tom has a passion for those in need, whether the incarcerated, those experiencing homelessness, or people just needing a hand up. It is his heartfelt belief that all people have value and should be treated with dignity. Tom always sees the good in people and what they can accomplish."

Tom studied for his Bachelor of Arts degree at Sacred Heart Seminary and then Wayne State University. He earned his Masters of Arts in English Literature from Wayne State University. He married Mary in 1969, and together they are in the "enjoy-the-grandkids" place in their lives.

AGHOGHO EDEVBIE

A Detroit native, Aghogho Edevbie attended St. Valentine Catholic School in Redford, followed by University of Detroit Jesuit High School. Aghogho earned a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the University of Michigan and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Michigan Law School.



He lives in the downtown Detroit area and works in Detroit and statewide as Director of the Michigan Chapter of All Voting Is Local. Previous to this position, Aghogho interned with the Michigan Supreme Court and with Federal Judge Arthur Tarnow, and worked as an attorney for Wayne County before campaigning as a candidate for the Michigan House of Representatives in 2018.

Aghogho has been actively involved in voter protection efforts since 2010. He joined the staff of the national organization All Voting is Local because he learned that in 2016 over a million Americans tried to vote but could not due to long lines, problems with their registration and strict voter ID laws. He believes that our democracy is stronger when all voices are heard, and works in Michigan to dismantle barriers to the ballot.

After law school, but prior to beginning his career as an attorney, Aghogho followed the counsel of his high school mentor, Bro. Jim Boynton, SJ, and traveled to Tanzania (*yes, he did climb Mt. Kilimanjaro*) where he taught Civics at St. Peter Claver Jesuit High School. He took this assignment in part so that he could give back in the spirit of the Jesuit motto, "Men and Women for Others."