

Donna Harkness, CELA
Professor of Clinical Law
Director, Elder Law Clinic
(901) 678-5138
dharknss@memphis.edu

ELDER LAW CLINIC

Why Elder Law? Senior citizens are among the fastest growing demographic groups, comprising more than twelve percent of the population. Because the elderly experience difficulties unique to their age group, their legal needs often demand specialized training.

What Skills Training is Offered? Student attorneys will develop **core legal skills** through representation of elderly clients across a broad range of substantive areas. Students conduct client and witness interviews, engage in factual development of cases and legal research and writing, problem solving, written communications, and drafting wills, living wills, powers of attorney, and other legal documents. Students should expect some litigation and courtroom experience, as well as opportunities for advocacy before administrative agencies. Students will participate in Acase review meetings@ to discuss progress in their cases and be introduced to the tenets of holistic practice, therapeutic jurisprudence, and the principles of elder law practice established by the National Elder Law Foundation. Students will have an opportunity to utilize their knowledge of substantive, procedural, and evidentiary law, and to consider and apply their knowledge of the Tennessee Rules of Professional Conduct in a live client setting.

What Types of Cases May Be Involved? Consumer protection, senior exploitation issues, predatory lending, contracts, wills, advance directives, grandparent adoption, health care and long term care issues, capacity, conservatorship, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, insurance landlord/tenant, housing and real property law, and uncontested divorce.

How Many Credit Hour and Grades? Clinic students will earn four (4) hours of academic credit for the semester upon satisfactory Clinic performance. Letter grades are based on the student=s mastery of fundamental lawyering skills.

What Prerequisites? Clinic prerequisites are Professional Responsibility and Evidence.

Time Requirements? Elder Law Clinic student attorneys will attend group orientation sessions for the first three weeks of the semester. Thereafter, student attorneys will attend weekly class case review sessions and be available an additional seven hours per week at the Clinic Office at set times to be arranged with the Clinical Professor. Students are expected to spend fifteen (15) hours per week total on Clinic activities, with the additional hours outside of those already scheduled for weekly class sessions and regular office hours being spent conducting investigation, research, trial preparation, etc. Because a significant number of elderly clients are homebound, students may be expected to conduct up to two Ahome visit@ interviews during the semester, accompanied by the Clinic Director.