

### Media News



Courtesy Photo/NMSU



Criminal Investigation  
Class – taking  
fingerprints



### Message from the Department Head

It is hard to believe that it is already Fall and we are just a month away from Thanksgiving (at least at the time I am writing my message).

As everyone reading this might guess, the weather in Las Cruces is just wonderful. Fall is really the best time of year in Las Cruces, the sun is shining and the temperature is just perfect (ok, it is a little cool early in the morning, but by 10:00am it is perfect). This semester has turned out to be a very busy one with so much going on.

Our student organizations are busy planning a number of events including the Clothesline Project – which will have already taken place by the time you read this. This project was the brainchild of Dr. Ahram Cho who has put countless hours into the planning and fundraising for this event. She has also elicited the help of our Graduate Student Organization, Humans for Humans, and APS. The purpose of this event is to raise awareness and provide resources for survivors of assault and abuse. Individuals attending the event are encouraged to share their story on a t-shirt that is provided for them to share their message of solidarity and healing, with the goal of breaking the silence about this critical issue in our country. It is undertaken in October in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

I have to tell you an interesting fact about this event which was started back in 1990. Organizers were looking at statistics and examined the number of young men and women who lost their lives in the Vietnam conflict (around 58,000) and examined the number of individuals (both men and women) who lost their lives to domestic violence during the same time period – shockingly it was about 51,000 individuals. The similarity in the number of individuals who lost their lives is all the evidence we need to understand the magnitude of the problem of domestic violence in this country. I applaud Dr. Cho and all of our students who participated in this event to bring awareness to this problem.

I always mention in the newsletter how much I enjoy speaking with alumni in our program. As a testament to this fact, Mike Vigil, who is featured in the edition of the newsletter, was one such individual who had received the newsletter and decided to reach out and say hello. Learning about all he has done in his career and what he has accomplished, once again, made me so proud to be an alum and to also be associated with our department. The documentary, news stories, and books that I have read about his life and work with the DEA are just outstanding.

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## Media News



H4H event and classroom presentation



Tulsa PD recruiting event



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## Message from the Department Head

So please consider reaching out as I know we have others who have had or are having outstanding careers and I gain so much satisfaction in speaking with those who have made us proud. Drop us a line or stop by and let us share in your accomplishments.

I would also like to thank two of our alumni who invited me to Tulsa OK a few weeks back to meet with the rather large contingency of NMSU CJ alumni who are proudly serving for the Tulsa PD. I was able to tour their training academy, their various divisions and meet with many of their command staff. Just this week five of our students traveled to Tulsa for interviews and testing. There are a number of others that will be traveling to Tulsa next month to do the same. My thanks to all those I met (please see the pictures in this newsletter) and to both David Medrano and Jesse Guardiola who hosted me for this event. The highlights of my visit were my ride along with an NMSU graduate and having dinner with about five other graduates. Another highlight was participating with an academy class on high-speed pursuits – I am happy to report that I did not stain my pants during this event – it was rather intense!!

As I am writing this message, the department has two searches underway to hopefully hire two new tenure track faculty members who will start next Fall. Such hires are a critical part of our job to ensure that our department continues to offer the best possible educational experience to all of our majors. We have been very lucky to have hired our top candidates over the past few years and we want to continue this trend. We are competing with universities around the country for a very limited number of highly qualified candidates (there are approximately 3 jobs for every candidate searching for a position). We have a lot to offer and our alumni and their accomplishments is just one example of the legacy of our program.

Once again, let me make an open invitation to each of you to stop by or drop us a note to let us know how you are doing. Nothing gives me more pleasure than talking with an alum and if possible, to feature such individuals in future newsletters. It is interesting to hear about each of your experiences as students at NMSU.

*Dennis Giever*  
[dgiever@nmsu.edu](mailto:dgiever@nmsu.edu)

# Welcome New Faculty

## Ida D'Antonio-Hangen



Ida is a College Associate Professor after being either an Adjunct or a Visiting Professor since Spring of 2019. She received her Criminal Justice undergrad degree at the University of Texas at El Paso. After graduating, she moved to Dallas, Texas, to begin her law enforcement career. From 1990 to 1993, Ida was an Adult Probation Officer in Dallas. From 1993 to 1996, she was hired by Dallas Ft. Worth Airport Department of Public Safety. She was cross trained to be a firefighter and police officer. Having attended both of these academies prepared her for employment as a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). She was employed and retired from the FBI after 22 years of service. Before she retired, Ida enrolled at NMSU and received her Masters in Criminal Justice.

## James F. "Jim" Breckenridge



James "Jim" Breckenridge is an Adjunct Professor who brings over 23 years of law enforcement and leadership experience to the classroom. Jim began his Federal Law Enforcement career as a Special Agent with the U.S. Secret Service in Albuquerque, NM in 1999 where he conducted multiple criminal investigations involving counterfeit currency, bank & credit card fraud, identity theft and threats against the President, Vice President, and other Secret Service protectees. As part of his duties, Jim performed a multitude of physical protection assignments both domestically and abroad. While with U.S. Secret Service, Jim performed forensic computer examinations in support of Secret Service investigative priorities, to include counterfeiting, fraud, protective operations, and child exploitation. He transferred to Washington, D.C. in January 2007 and served on the physical protection details for the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Vice President that took him to many destinations in the US and abroad.

## Scott Garland



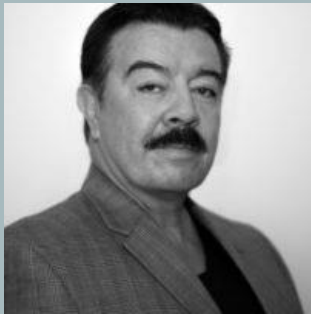
Scott Garland is a Visiting Professor who began his career with the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) as a Correctional Officer at the United States Penitentiary (USP), Hazelton, a high-security facility in Bruceton Mills, West Virginia, 2009. He held positions of increasing responsibility as a Senior Officer, USP Hazelton, in September 2010, Case Manager, USP Hazelton, in February 2012, and Case Management Coordinator, FCI La Tuna, in Anthony, Texas, in December of 2016. He was selected as the agency's National Victim Witness Program Coordinator, Central Office, Washington, D.C., in March of 2020. He operationalized the BOP's victim witness program and served as the agency's liaison with the Federal courts, United States Attorneys, U.S. Parole Commission, and U.S. Probation. He brings over thirteen years of law enforcement experience to the classroom and intends to leverage his field experience to topics discussed throughout the semester.



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## Mike Vigil

### Alumni of New Mexico State's Criminal Justice program



## Alumni Spotlight

Michael S. Vigil was born and raised in Española, New Mexico. He earned his degree in Criminal Justice at New Mexico State University where he graduated with Honors. He recalls that his arrival at the university was at the peak of the counterculture and criminology classes consisted of approximately seven students during his first two years. In his junior and senior years, a renewed interest in law enforcement caused the same classes to grow exponentially. Ed Farris and Dick Lease were the only two professors with Ron Pincomb joining the staff a few years later. Mr. Vigil credits the criminal justice department at NMSU for providing a strong foundation for the challenges that were to come in his dangerous career. The analytical skills, investigative acumen, the importance of intelligence, and strategic vision that he learned were the most important skillsets provided by his studies.

He later joined the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and became one of its most highly

decorated agents. He served in thirteen foreign and domestic posts of duty and rose through the ranks to the highest levels of the Senior Executive Service. He was the Special Agent in Charge of the Caribbean and San Diego Divisions. He also served as the Chief of International Operations in charge of all DEA offices worldwide.

Mr. Vigil has received numerous awards during his elite career such as law enforcement's most prestigious recognition: The National Association of Police Organization's (NAPO) "Top Cop" award. This accolade is only given to ten law enforcement heroes each year from thousands of submissions nationwide.

Many foreign governments have honored Mr. Vigil for his extraordinary and courageous efforts in the violent struggle against transnational organized crime. He is the only American to be made an Honorary General by the country of Afghanistan. China bestowed him with the "Key" to the city of Shanghai.

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## Alumni Spotlight

The President of the Dominican Republic presented him with an admiral's sword at an International Drug Enforcement Conference in Santo Domingo. Colombia also awarded him with a distinguished service medal and an officer's sword. Many other countries have also recognized his global efforts with countless honors.

He is mentioned in over twenty-five books and appears on worldwide documentaries, and popular television programs such as Gangsters: America's Most Evil, The Rise and Fall of El Chapo, Manhunt: Kill or Capture, Narco Wars, and NETFLIX'S Drug Lords.

Mr. Vigil is a contributor to CNN, MSNBC, NBC, ABC, CBS, Telemundo, Univision, Chinese Global Television, NPR, TRT, Al Jazeera, BBC, TV Azteca, El Financiero Bloomberg, FOX, NTN 24, Caracol Television, CNN Español, and dozens of internationally syndicated newspapers and radio stations.

He is also a contributor to the highly regarded Cipher Brief. He is an international expert on transnational organized crime and gives interviews worldwide on a daily basis.

His highly acclaimed memoir, DEAL, was released in 2014. Metal Coffins: The Blood Alliance Cartel, Narco Queen, Land of Enchantment Cartel, Afghan Warlord, The Rise of the Sicario, and Claw of the Dragon are his six fiction novels. Many of the scenarios, however, are derived from his extensive experience as an undercover agent.

He is the only American to have a corrido (ballad) made in his honor by Alberto Angel AKA El Cuervo, a famous recording artist and composer

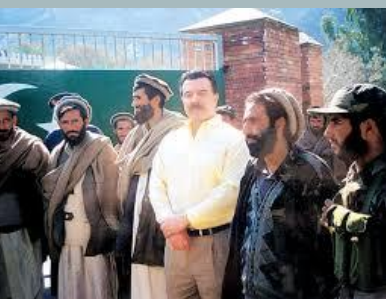
Mr. Vigil was responsible for the largest and most successful operations in the DEA's history. The most significant one involved thirty-six countries in the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central and South America.

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## Mike Vigil

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## Alumni Spotlight

After the fall of the Taliban in 2001, he designed and implemented Operation Containment consisting of twenty-five countries, including China and Russia. Prior to this initiative, only a few kilograms of heroin were seized annually in the region. During the first year of Operation Containment over twenty-four tons of pure heroin were confiscated. He also developed regional intelligence centers allowing foreign countries to exchange information on transnational organized crime. The centers are now operational globally.

Mr. Vigil was one of the most intrepid and legendary undercover agents in the history of the DEA. He successfully infiltrated some of the most violent and dangerous cartels in the world.

For those just starting their law enforcement careers, he recommends expanding their horizons and not being afraid of moving away from the comfort and safety of their cocoon.

"Ships are safe in harbor, but that is not what they are made for."

He also suggests individuals develop their analytical capacity, to include the skill of planning and executing broad and complex strategies. Status quo is no longer an option for strong leaders. He also states that interagency cooperation and the exchange of information will allow for a greater impact on crime. For those who will work in foreign countries, personal relationships with counterparts are the key to getting things done.

The following links to articles and videos related to Mr. Vigil's career:

[In the trenches with a DEA Agent; 13 questions for retired drug fighter turned author](#)

How DEA Agent Mike Vigil Caught The Man Responsible For The Crack Epidemic Of The 80s | Our History:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=8Q\\_c9kmMy5c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=8Q_c9kmMy5c)

[Cartel kingpin El Mencho who is even more savage than El Chapo may NEVER be captured, says legendary narco cop](#)

[This man used to fight the cartels. He knows why Trump's wall won't work.](#)

[Juan Matta-Ballesteros: Legendary narcotics trafficker](#)

[Mexico's will to extradite Rafael Caro Quintero questioned after judge issues definitive suspension](#)



## Faculty Awards & Promotions

Congratulations to **Dr. Carlos Posadas**, who was promoted to Full Professor at the fall 2022 convocation!

Congratulations to **Marija Dimitrijevic**, College Associate Professor, who received the Donald C. Roush Awards for Teaching Excellence!

NMSU bestows the Roush awards – named after a former NMSU executive vice president in recognition of his efforts to improve teaching in New Mexico – based on information from students, department heads, deans and community campus directors.

Dimitrijevic, a college associate professor of criminal justice, uses her experience as a former criminal investigator to create a learning environment that is both exciting and rigorous. In addition to teaching criminal justice courses at NMSU, Dimitrijevic is a human trafficking advocate and conducts training for federal law enforcement agencies and other organizations.



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### Dr. Giever visited the Tulsa PD

CJ Department Head, Dr. Dennis Giever, visited the Tulsa OK a few weeks back to meet with the rather large contingency of NMSU CJ alumni who are proudly serving for the Tulsa PD.

He was able to tour their training academy, their various divisions and meet with many of their command staff. Just this week five of our students traveled to Tulsa for interviews and testing. There are a number of others that will be traveling to Tulsa next month to do the same.

"My thanks to all those I met and to both David Medrano and Jesse Guardiola who hosted me for this event. The highlights of my visit were my ride along with an NMSU graduate and having dinner with about five other graduates. Another highlight was participating with an academy class on high-speed pursuits" - Dr. Giever



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## CJ Classroom Moments – Practicals with Professor Ida D'Antonio

### CJUS 321 Criminal Investigation, *Professor Ida D'Antonio-Hangen*

Here are the scenarios the students created to show a bloated body, skeletalization, and one they had to really think about.

Every week I assign one of my student groups to conduct an activity on the subject matter of the week. This group had too much fun setting up rooms with examples of blood spatter. The other students have to come in and answer questions about the spatter. Who says learning can't be fun?! My students underwent different mock crime scenes. This group was so thorough, they even found the murder weapon that was "hidden in plain sight." Proud of my students as they implemented all that they are learning in class.

Professor Ida D'Antonio –Hangen had fun dusting and printing fingerprints with her students in criminal investigation course:

"We made a mess on the desks, so I had to take the next class outside. Next week....mock crime scenes. The Department head cleared the basement of our building, so we could have permanent mock crime scenes. I have had too much fun putting these together including playing with fake blood. Can't wait for next week!" - Ida.



# The Clothesline Project

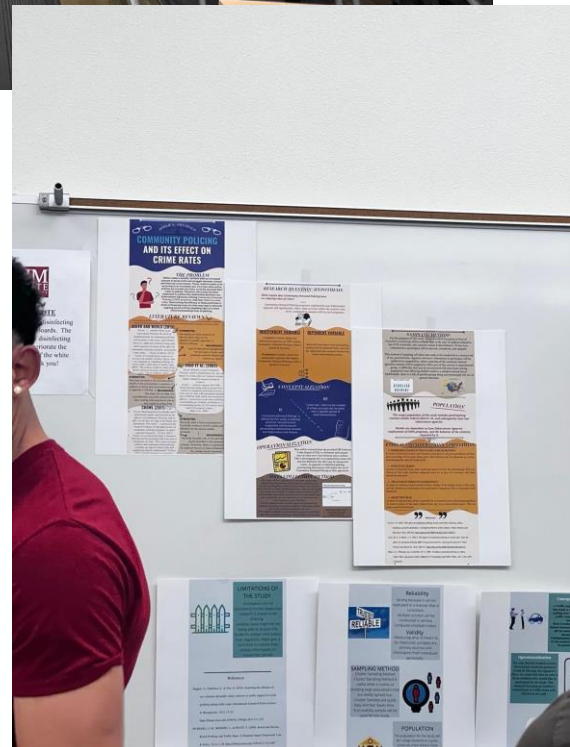
**"Breaking the Silence."** More than 200 t-shirts were on display in NMSU's Corbett Center Ballroom as part of the Department of Criminal Justice's **"Clothesline Project"** exhibition. The Clothesline Project is an interactive exhibit, which displays t-shirts with graphic messages and illustrations to increase awareness of the impact of violence and abuse. The exhibit attracted hundreds of people & participants were invited to share their stories on t-shirts, which were then attached to several lengths of clothesline strung across the ballroom. The shirts are color-coded based on the type of violence or abuse. Seventeen organizations including La Piñon and La Casa were on hand to provide resources for victims, survivors and family members.





# Infographics Poster Presentations

**Dr. Posadas and Dr. Cho** have coordinated their CJUS 300 (Introduction to Research Methods) classes and all students were tasked with putting together a research proposal in Infographic poster form. The students presented their final projects in Guthrie Hall room 100.







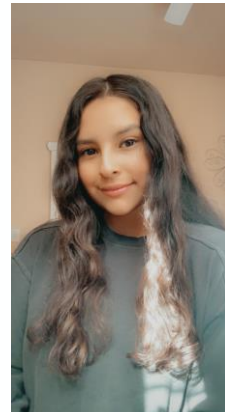
# Criminal Justice Department



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[Andreia Scarborough](#)  
(our Administrative  
Assistant)



[Alexis Renteria](#)  
(student  
worker/administrative  
assistant)

Thank you Andreia and Alexis for taking care of student and faculty needs. Your personal touches and caring for each individual student is absolutely noticed.  
Thank you both!

Please touch back to us and let us learn about your career and what you have done since you graduated.

Please send a short note or email briefly describing your careers. We might include these in future Newsletters or on our website. It would be nice for our alumni to hear from others and what they have been doing since they left NMSU.

Please check our [alumni success webpage](#)  
[Newsletters page](#)

NEW: Connect with Us on [LinkedIn](#)

Please visit the [CJ Giving Page](#) to see how you can contribute to the future success of Criminal Justice Students.