

# **MARGARET R. THOMAS**

Assistant Clinical Professor

Chapman University

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## **EDUCATION**

**California Western School of Law**  
**Juris Doctor**, April 2003

San Diego, California

**Clemson University**  
**Bachelor of Science, Marketing**, December 1999

Clemson, South Carolina

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

### **Academic Experience**

**Chapman University**, Orange, California

**August 2009 – Present**

Assistant Clinical Professor, Institute for Military Personnel, Veterans, Human Rights and International Law & AMVETS Legal Clinic

- Supervise litigation of various civil law cases
- Supervise drafting of briefs and submission to the various branches of the Military and Department of Veterans Affairs
- Integral in clinic recovering over \$4.5 million in benefits for its clients

Classes Taught:

- AMVETS Legal Clinic
- Advanced AMVETS Legal Clinic
- Military and Veterans Law
- Select Topics in American Law

**John Marshall Law School**, Chicago, Illinois

Guest Lecturer - September 2007 & November 2008

**University of Illinois College of Law**, Champaign, Illinois

Guest Lecturer – March 2008

### **Legal Experience**

**Office of the Illinois Attorney General**, Chicago, Illinois

**May 2007 – March 2009**

Assistant Attorney General, Special Litigation Bureau

- Responsible for all aspects of litigation arising out of general civil litigation. Second chaired civil trial.
- Prepared initial case assessments and determined whether cases warranted further action by the Illinois Attorney General.
- Researched legal issues, conducted document review, took depositions and wrote subpoenas, pleadings, and motions.
- Negotiated confidentiality agreements.

#### Assistant Bureau Chief, Military and Veterans' Rights Bureau

- Advised Attorney General Lisa Madigan and her staff on military issues facing Illinois' veterans and servicemembers.
- Educated Illinois employers, government agencies, and legal organizations in how to implement Illinois state reemployment rights, employment benefits, and consumer protections available to veterans, servicemembers and their dependants.
- Negotiated with both Management and Labor to ensure proper compliance with reemployment rights and employment benefits.
- Synthesized complex laws into understandable brochures and publications for distribution throughout Illinois.
- Advocated on behalf of Illinois' veterans and servicemembers through mediation with employers, businesses, and other veteran organizations.
- Monitored existing legislation and recommended new legislative initiatives.
- Conducted interviews for new Veterans' Rights Bureau Chief.

#### **The John Marshall Law School, Veterans Legal Support Clinic, Chicago, Illinois    Fall 2007 – March 2009** Board of Advisors

- Advised the law school clinic on how to assist military veterans and their dependants in obtaining benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Assisted the law school in creating awareness of the legal needs of veterans and recruited *pro bono* attorneys to provide legal assistance.
- Recruited and trained pro bono attorneys to represent veterans and servicemembers before the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and administrative government agencies.

#### **LegalPeople, LLC, Chicago, Illinois**

**January 2007 - April 2007**

#### Contract Attorney with Sidley Austin, LLP

- Conducted paper and electronic document review in commercial and securities litigation.

#### **U.S. Army Judge Advocate General Corps.**

**January 2004 - January 2007**

#### Command Judge Advocate and Trial Counsel

- Deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom with the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (Air Assault). Awarded the Bronze Star Medal for outstanding leadership and combat success.
- Advised the Commander of a 4,000 Soldier unit on issues ranging from administrative and criminal law to the legal implications of tactical operations.
- First chaired federal felony offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and prepared numerous cases for trial.
- Investigated, negotiated, and settled claims under the Foreign Claims Act.
- Managed legal staff of eight.

#### Operational Law Attorney

- Counseled the Commander of the Modularity Coordination Cell on legal ramifications of Division wide transformation.
- Advised the Command Staff on the Laws of Armed Conflict and Rules of Engagement.
- Trained and taught Commanders and Soldiers on the legal issues related to deployment.

#### Legal Assistance Attorney

- Counseled servicemembers, retirees, and military family members on trust and estates, landlord-tenant rights, child support/custody issues, and consumer affairs.
- Drafted wills and pro se divorce pleadings.
- Negotiated settlements with creditors, banks, and landlords on behalf of Soldiers.

- Prepared wrongful death cases for trial.
- Conducted research and discovery. Drafted motions and organized mock trials.

### **HONORS AND AWARDS**

#### **Military Awards**

- Bronze Star Medal
- Army Achievement Medal
- National Defense Service Medal
- Iraq Campaign Medal
- Global War on Terrorism Service Medal
- Army Service Ribbon
- Overseas Service Ribbon
- Combat Action Badge
- Air Assault Badge

#### **Law School**

- Dean's List, Spring 2003
- Pro Bono Honors Society
- Intern: San Diego Public Defender's Office, Spring 2003
- Intern: NARAL – Pro Choice America, Fall 2002
- Intern: San Diego BayKeeper and Surfrider Foundation, Summer 2001

### **MILITARY TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

- Deployed to Iraq in Support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, (August 2005 – August 2006)
- Criminal Law Advocacy Course, U.S. Army Judge Advocate School, Charlottesville, VA (March 2005, completed with honors)
- Mobile Training Team Emergency Preparedness Course, Headquarters Forces Command, Fort McPherson, GA (September 2004)
- Air Assault School, The Sabalauski Air Assault School, Fort Campbell, KY (September 2004)
- JAG Officer Basic Course, U.S. Army Judge Advocate School, Charlottesville, VA (April 2004)

### **BAR MEMBERSHIPS**

- **Illinois:** Admitted November 2003
  - U.S District Court for the Northern District of Illinois

- **California:** Admitted June 2009
  - U.S. District Court for the Central District of California
- Court of Appeals of Veterans Claims

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **Books**

*The TriCare Program and Servicemembers Group Life Insurance (SGLI): SGLI and Related SGLI Benefits* IN DESKTOP GUIDE TO MILITARY SERVICE AND CIVIL LAW, Akeela White & Margaret R. Thomas, (Brian Clauss ed., MATTHEW BENDER).

### **Articles**

*Employees Called to Duty in the National Guard and Reserve – An Overview of the Applicable Federal and Illinois Laws*, THE ILLINOIS MUNICIPAL LEAGUE NEWSLETTER, February 2008, at p.21-23.

### **Practice Guides**

*Illinois State Laws and Benefits in MILITARY SERVICE AND THE LAW* (IICLE, 2009).

### **Pamphlets**

*Line of Duty Compensation Act and Its Impact on Members of the Armed Forces*, ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL (2007).

*Hiring & Promotion Preference within State & Local Government*, ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL (2007).

*Guard/Reserve Call-Up Information*, ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL (2007).

*Employment Rights of Persons Discharged from Military Service*, ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL (2007).

ALLEN J. LYNCH, *Benefits for Illinois Veterans*, ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL (Margaret R. Thomas ed. 2007) (2003).

### **Periodicals**

Elizabeth A. Cavendish ET AL., *Who Decides? A State-by-State Review of Abortion and Reproductive Rights*, NARAL PRO CHOICE AMERICA, (12th ed. 2003).

## **SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS**

Presenter, Illinois Municipal Fire Chiefs, *Military Leave – USERRA and Illinois Law*, Chicago, Illinois, Spring 2007.

Guest Speaker, Illinois American Legion State Convention, *Military Issues - Employment, Reemployment, Consumer Protections, and Benefits*, Peoria, Illinois, Summer 2007.

Guest Speaker, Illinois Jewish War Veterans, *Military Issues - Employment, Reemployment, Consumer Protections, and Benefits*, Chicago, Illinois, Summer 2007.

Guest Speaker, Illinois AMVETS State Convention, *Military Issues - Employment, Reemployment, Consumer Protections, and Benefits*, Springfield, Illinois, June, 2007.

Guest Speaker, Illinois Veterans of Foreign Wars State Convention, *Military Issues - Employment, Reemployment, Consumer Protections, and Benefits*, Danvers, Illinois, June 2007.

Guest Speaker, Illinois Disabled American Veterans State Convention, *Military Issues - Employment, Reemployment, Consumer Protections, and Benefits*, Springfield, Illinois, June 2007.

Lecturer, The John Marshall Law School, *Impact of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act*, Chicago Illinois, September 2007.

Presenter, Labor and Employment Relations Association, *Federal and State Military Leave and Labor Relations*, Chicago, Illinois, October, 2007.

Panelist, Illinois Municipal League Annual Conference, *Military Activation and Return - the Public Sector Employee and the Public Sector Employer*, Chicago, Illinois, October 19, 2007.

Presenter, Illinois Association of Paralegals Annual Conference, *Military Leave – USERRA and Illinois Law*, Chicago, Illinois, November 8, 2007.

Presenter, Veterans Legal Support Center at The John Marshall Law School and the Illinois State Bar Association, *Military Issues – State and Federal Law*, Chicago, Illinois, November 9, 2007.

Presenter, Illinois Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Annual Meeting, *Military Leave - Developing Issues and Trends*, Springfield, Illinois, January 11, 2008.

Lecturer, University of Illinois College of Law, *Experiences of a female JAG Officer deployed in Iraq and Enforcement of the Law of Armed Conflict and Rules of Engagement*, Champaign, Illinois, March 2008.

Guest Speaker, Labor and Employment Relations Association, *Federal and State Military Leave and Labor Relations*, Chicago, Illinois, March 18, 2008.

Panelist, Illinois Department Employment Security, *Military Leave – USERRA and Illinois Law*, Palos Hills, Illinois, Spring 2008.

Presenter, Illinois Municipal Fire Chiefs, *Military Leave – USERRA and Illinois Law*, Chicago, Illinois, Spring 2008.

Presenter, Illinois National Guard Family Readiness Group, *Mobilization Legal Briefs – Employment, Reemployment, and Consumer Protections*, Champaign, Illinois, Summer 2008.

Presenter, Chicago Volunteer Legal Services, *Servicemember Civil Relief Act*, June 18 2008.

Guest Speaker, Illinois AMVETS State Convention, *Military Issues - Employment, Reemployment, Consumer Protections, and Benefits*, Springfield, Illinois, June, 2008.

Guest Speaker, Illinois Disabled American Veterans State Convention, *Military Issues - Employment, Reemployment, Consumer Protections, and Benefits*, Springfield, Illinois, June 2008.

Guest Speaker, Illinois Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve - ESGR Ombudsman Training, *Military Issues – State and Federal Law*, Chicago, Illinois, June, 2008.

Guest Speaker, Illinois American Legion State Convention, *Military Issues - Employment, Reemployment, Consumer Protections, and Benefits*, Springfield, Illinois, July 2008.

Presenter, Illinois National Guard, *Mobilization Legal Briefs – Employment, Reemployment, and Consumer Protections*, Provided this presentation throughout the state of Illinois multiple times between July and September 2008.

Panelist, Illinois Municipal League Annual Conference, *Military Activation and Return - the Public Sector Employee and the Public Sector Employer*, Chicago, Illinois, October 2008.

Presenter, Veterans Legal Support Center at The John Marshall Law School and the Illinois State Bar Association, *Military Issues – Employment and Re-Employment, VA Benefits and State Laws*, Collinsville, Illinois, October 10, 2008.

Presenter, Office of the Illinois Attorney General, *Military Service and the Law*, Springfield, Illinois, October 16, 2008.

Panel Presentation, Moderator, The John Marshall Law School Veterans Legal Support Center & Clinic, *Legal and Medical Issues Facing our Nation's Veterans*, November 8, 2008.

Lecturer, The John Marshall School of Law, *Legislative Drafting and the Military*, Chicago, Illinois, November 2008.

Presenter, Office of the Illinois Attorney General, *Military Service and the Law*, Chicago, Illinois, January 29, 2009.

Moderator, The John Marshall Law School Veterans Legal Support Center & Clinic, *Checkpoints & Roadblocks: The Intersection of Veterans and the Law*, Chicago, Illinois, November 6-7, 2009.

### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

*Veterans Day Welcome Home Celebration*, VA Long Beach Healthcare System and Los Alamitos Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, CA, November 11, 2009.

Mentor, California Western School of Law Alumni Mentor Program, began Fall 2009.

*Bridging the Gap, Community Military Resource Fair*, Venture, CA February 26, 2011

*Military Transition Career Fair*, Brandman University, Irvine, CA, April 11, 2012