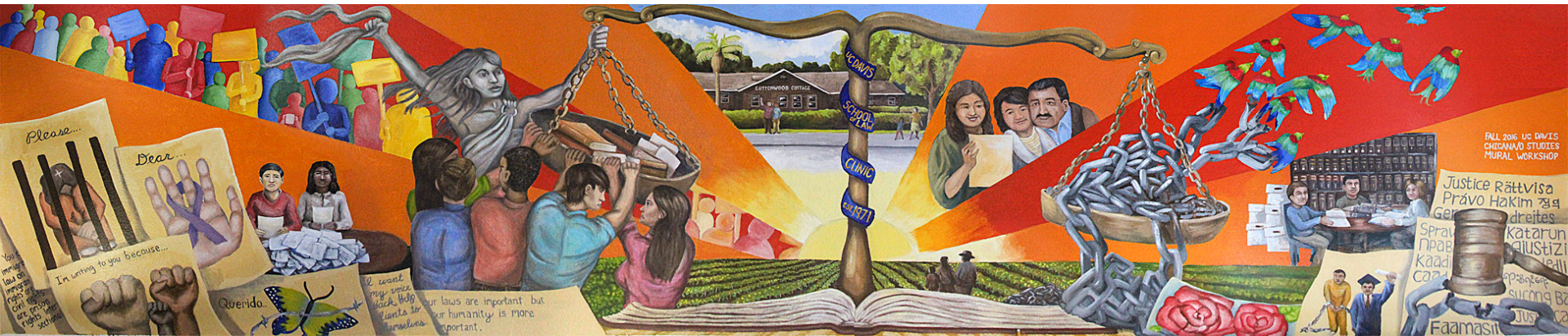




Letters of Hope, Stories of Justice

Fall 2016 Chicana/o Studies Mural Workshop, Directed by Maceo Montoya

Left Side (Trapped)

On the far left we've depicted letters representing different aspects of being systematically trapped. The letter with the individual behind bars represents the Prison Law Clinic. It portrays isolation and hardship, as well as a sense of desperation. The letter is representative of the lack of accessibility to lawyers due to economic challenges, language barriers, or simply being afraid of not being able to win a case. We then move over to the letter in bottom left that showcases three fists, which represents the Civil Rights Clinic. The usage of the fists symbolizes solidarity, unity, and resistance amongst people whose rights are being violated by those in power. The letter slightly behind exhibits a hand that is a representation of the Family Protection and Legal Assistance Clinic. It also portrays the domestic violence ribbon, which represents the trauma, fear, and vulnerability that these individuals face on a daily basis. Underneath this letter, you see a butterfly ensnared in barbed wire that depicts the Immigration Law Clinic. The butterfly and barbed wire are a representation of immigration and the obstacles, injustices, and sacrifice these individuals face when leaving their homeland and entering a new country. Above, there is an endless amount of letters on the desk and two young lawyers read through the letters from potential clients. Behind them a group of activist hold signs, united as a community, striving for justice, social change, and solidarity. To the side, there are future lawyers and legal workers trying to balance the system. In the scale, there are books which illustrate that lawyers and legal workers use their education to fight the system and bring equity. Helping balance the scale is Lady Justice. She has removed her blindfold, removing the idea that there is blind justice. She sees the system for what it is, full of challenges and inherent bias.

Center (Agency)

When looking at the center, there is a scale representative of the justice system. The scale sits on a law book, which is the base because these books serve as the outlet for the student workers helping bring justice to their clients. In the background we see a vignette of fields and a working family. The family represents the many farm working families the cottages once held and the workers they assist now and the sun rising represents new day and the possibility of hope for a better tomorrow. On the top center, there is a literal depiction of the cottages that currently house the clinics. The cottage is placed in the center because the cottage is the center of hope and support. To the right of that, there is a family brought to joy by the "magical papers." They are called magical because they bring privileges, create opportunities, give relief, and allow for agency.

Right Side (Liberation)

Moving away from the center, to the right we see a scale weighted with chains. As you can see, the chains create an unequal balance. The chains on the scale are representative of oppression, legal barriers and structural setbacks faced by clinic clients and service providers. As a representation of liberation we depicted the chains breaking and emerging into doves. The doves are representative of the freedom of spirit that the cottage allows for the clients to attain through their resources and services. In the vignette below, we see an illustration of a room located inside the law clinic. In the room is a library where most of the resources used by the providers and law students are located. We wanted to illustrate the safe space in which a lot of these sensitive conversations take place. At the center of this safe space we see law students assisting a child, their client. The law students represent guidance, empathy and will to support their client; in return the client is grateful. Below are "Thank you" letters received by the law clinic. On the first letter (from left to right) are illustrated roses. These roses are representative of the bouquets and other thank you gifts that law student and clinic providers receive as a result of their hard work and dedication to assist their clients in need. In the letter to the right we see a past and future image of an individual, this letter tells the story of a child or young man who was detained and received services from the clinic. As an adult this client returned to thank the staff and inform them that he was receiving a degree from UC Davis. The following letter depicts three joyous individuals, a child being embraced by his parents. This letter thanks the clinic for family reunification as many of these clients are parents or children that have been separated from their family members, but with aid from the clinic are finally brought together. The final letter depicts various renditions of the word JUSTICE. The word is represented in many languages showcasing the many communities served by the clinic and its dedication to human rights regardless of borders. To illustrate this overall idea of justice we have portrayed the breaking of chains of oppression by a gavel. The gavel represents the clinic, law students and providers breaking through legal barriers to help empower their clients and regain their agency.