

Downey Brand. | **William Lapcevic** has been named a partner in the Sacramento law firm Ellis Law Group LLP. | **John Newell** has been named director of the Rozier E. Sanchez Judicial Education Center of New Mexico, which provides education and training to the judges, administrators and other staff of the New Mexico judicial branch. | **Anthony**

**Williams** has been appointed to the California Fish and Game Commission. Williams has been director of government relations at the Boeing Company since 2014.

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**Ric Asfar** has joined the Vaka Law Group as an attorney in Tampa, Florida. Asfar will continue to practice civil appeals and litigation

with an emphasis on representing plaintiffs in catastrophic personal, wrongful death, and insurance coverage and bad faith matters. | **Meghan Baker** has been named partner in the Sacramento firm Downey Brand. | **Adam Koss** has been promoted to partner at Murphy Pearson Bradley & Feeny. Koss represents professionals and their businesses in real

## SERVING AND CONNECTING

Two alumni offer personalized legal services to the local Muslim and South Asian communities

By Joanna Corman



**Sahreen Manzar, '13** (left), and classmate **Sameera Ali, '12**, noticed in law school that there was a lack of Muslim attorneys serving communities of Indian or Pakistani descent. So they decided to start their own firm, Crimmigration, in June 2013.

The term “crimmigration” describes the intersection of criminal defense and immigration law. While this is the main focus of their firm, they also practice family law and corporate law when it overlaps with immigration law.

Manzar developed the firm’s blueprint during Professor Raquel Aldana’s immigration law class. Aldana talked about the many immigrants whose legal needs are served by lawyers abroad who are not familiar with U.S. laws and practices. Manzar wanted to address that niche.

Crimmigration was founded with the intention of serving South Asian and Muslim communities in the Sacramento area; the firm has since opened another office in Fremont. Though their services are available to everyone, they specifically wanted to reach out to Pakistani and Indian immigrants and their families—populations, they say, that are often hesitant to seek out legal advice, in part for cultural reasons.

Manzar, who was born in Pakistan, and Ali, who was born in Southern California to Indian-born parents, emphasize “cultural competency.” That means, in part, speaking to clients in their native languages and connecting with them through their shared backgrounds.

Starting out on their own was a risk, but Manzar and Ali say the proximity to McGeorge means access to their mentors when they need it most. “I feel like McGeorge is looking after us,” Manzar says.