

2015 PUBLIC INTEREST HONORS DINNER

CELEBRATING STUDENTS
WHO HAVE DEMONSTRATED
A COMMITMENT TO THE
PUBLIC INTEREST

KEYNOTE SPEAKER AND DISTINGUISHED GRADUATE
NANCY NORTHUP '88
PRESIDENT, CENTER FOR REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

APRIL 7, 2015

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY FACULTY HOUSE / PRESIDENTIAL BALLROOM

2015 public interest honors dinner

Columbia Law School
Social Justice Initiatives
April 7, 2015

Welcome

Ellen Chapnick

Dean for Social Justice Initiatives

Gillian Lester

Dean, Columbia Law School

Susan Lindenauer

Columbia Law School Board of Visitors Member

Introduction

Jennifer Sokoler '10

Law Clerk, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor

Keynote Address

Distinguished Public Interest Graduate of the Year

Nancy Northup '88

President and CEO, Center for Reproductive Rights

Presentation of Student Honors

Social Justice Initiatives Staff

distinguished honoree

Nancy Northup '88 is the President of the Center for Reproductive Rights, a global human rights organization that uses constitutional and international law to secure women's reproductive freedom. The Center has brought groundbreaking cases before national courts, U.N. committees, and regional human rights bodies, and has built the legal capacity of women's rights advocates in over 45 countries.

Ms. Northup joined the Center in 2003 with a rich mix of experience as a constitutional litigator, federal prosecutor, and women's rights advocate, and a reputation for intelligence, passion, and creativity. "I look forward to a time when a woman's right to control her reproductive life is secured as a fundamental human right, which cannot be denied in the name of religion, culture, or politics," Ms. Northup declared at the time.

Since then, Ms. Northup has pursued that vision at the Center with bold, new strategies. Under her leadership, the Center has aggressively expanded its international program, including the launch of an international litigation campaign that has included the first abortion case decided by the U.N. Human Rights Committee and the first case to frame preventable maternal deaths as a human rights violation. Building on their established reputation as first-rate litigators, the Center's lawyers have also taken the human rights framework into its work in the U.S. It is now documenting U.S. rights violations through fact-finding reports and holding the U.S. accountable before U.N. bodies that monitor compliance with international treaty obligations. In 2008, Ms. Northup led the Center to establish its Law School Initiative to promote legal scholarship and teaching on reproductive health and human rights, an emerging body of transnational law not yet widely taught in U.S. law schools. This ground-breaking effort will shape the thinking of the next generation of lawyers, judges, and policymakers through fellowships for recent law school graduates at Columbia Law School, a visiting scholars' program, curriculum development, conferences, and publications.

Before coming to the Center, Ms. Northup was the founding director of the Democracy Program at the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law. From 1989 to 1996, she served as a prosecutor and Deputy Chief of Appeals in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York.

Ms. Northup graduated from Brown University and Columbia Law School, where she was a Kent Scholar and Managing Editor of the Columbia Law Review. She served as a law clerk to the Honorable Alvin B. Rubin of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in New Orleans. Ms. Northup holds adjunct appointments at NYU Law School and Columbia Law School where she has taught courses in constitutional and human rights law.

honorees for post-graduate employment in public interest

The following 61 J.D. and 22 LL.M. students will be working at public interest organizations or government agencies immediately after graduation or clerkship:

Lauren Aarons	Madiba Dennie	Eric Lopez
Jackson Alberts	Christopher Forstrom	Helen Luu
Valantina Amalraj	Veronica Franco	Oliver McDonald
Namema Amendi	Merrow Golden	Yeniva Massaquoi
Stephanie Amoako	Madeline Gomez	Ignacio Menchaca
Noor Ashraf	Rohan Grey	Balqees Mihirig
Miriam Azu	Michael Haggar	William Monks
Olga Basko	Daniel Hamburg	Ashley Morales
Kathrin Bausch	Nina Hart	Neema Nassiri-Motlagh
Peter Berg	Whitney Hayes	Tochi Onyebuchi
Mark Bond	Ashleigh Hunt	Jacinth Pathmanathan
Mary Bradley	Mayra Joachin	Stephanie Persson
Anna Bulman	Katherine Kettle	Michael Pfautz
Caitlyn Carpenter	Bassam Khawaja	Jessica Pridgeon
Raul Carrillo	Gabrielle Kim	Rebecca Ramaswamy
Paul Chander	Danbee Kim	Kristina Ravic
Ashok Chandran	Ioana Lavric	Nandini Ravichandran
Bellinda Chinowawa	John Lee	Michael Regan
Nuzhat Chowdhury	Yeein Lee	Arielle Reid
Pakwan Chuensuwankul	Chris Lee	Xochitl Rodriguez
Bradley Demone	Jenna Long	Jason Rosenbaum

honorees for post-graduate employment in public interest

Olena Savytska

Nadia Segura

Joo Young Seo

Jessica Seo

Ami Shah

Matthew Sienkiewicz

Jacob Sklar

Melina Somoza Bornstein

Audrey Son

Katherine Stavis

Ethan Stone

Holly Stubbs

Carrie Tirrell

Raquel Toledo

Prateek Vasireddy

Lily-Diem Vo

Francis White

Christopher Wilds

Sarah Wilensky

Tali Yahalom

honorees for two public interest summers

These 52 students spent both law school summers working for public interest organizations or government agencies:

Namema Amendi	2014 2013	Vale Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment Kenya Ethical and Legal Issues Network
Stephanie Amoako	2014 2013	The International Legal Foundation United Nations Development Programme
Olga Basko	2014 2013	United Nations Development Programme to Belarus New York City Housing Authority
Peter Berg	2014 2013	United States Navy's Judge Advocate Generals Corps U.S. Attorney's Office - Central District of California
Matthew Birkhold	2014 2013	U.S. Department of State Massachusetts Department of Labor and Industry
Mark Bond	2014 2013	The Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Marshall Islands to the United Nations Environment and Security Initiative
Caitlyn Carpenter	2014 2013	Legal Aid Society - Juvenile Rights Division Lawyers for Children
Paul Chander	2014 2013	Legal Aid Society - Employment Law Division Bay Area Legal Aid
Ashok Chandran	2014 2013	ACLU Racial Justice Program U.S. Court of Appeals - 9th Circuit
Nuzhat Chowdhury	2014 2013	Childrens' Rights Inc. / Legal Resources Centre - Capetown ACLU of Georgia
Bryant Cobb	2014 2013	New York State Task Force for Life and the Law National Coalition Against Censorship
Madiba Dennie	2014 2013	NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund Equality Now
Christopher Forstrom	2014 2013	U.S. Department of Justice - Environmental and Natural Resources Division Iran Human Rights Documentation Center
Samantha Fox	2014 2013	New York County Supreme Court New York Public Library
Claire Glasspiegel	2014 2013	Juvenile Rights Division Special Litigation Unit Legal Aid Society - Partnership for Children's Rights

honorees for two public interest summers

Aryeh Goldman	2014 2013	New York State Department of Financial Services - Consumer Protection Queens County District Attorney's Office
Daniel Hamburg	2014 2013	Bronx Defenders EEOC
Nina Hart	2014 2013	U.S. Department of Justice - Environmental and Natural Resources Division Office of the Attorney General - Massachusetts
Whitney Hayes	2014 2013	Bronx Defenders - Criminal Defense Project American Civil Liberties Union - Capital Punishment Project
Mayra Joachin	2014 2013	Rosen Bien Galvin and Grunfeld Public Law Center
Gregory Kang	2014 2013	Singapore Government Singapore Police Department
Bassam Khawaja	2014 2013	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - Lebanon Human Rights Watch
Gabrielle Kim	2014 2013	U.S. Department of Justice - Civil Division Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund
Iona Lavric	2014 2013	Kernochan Center Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts
John Lee	2014 2013	Office of the Attorney General - New Jersey New York City Housing Authority
Jenna Long	2014 2013	U.S. Attorney's Office - Southern District of New York Los Angeles District Attorney's Office
Eric Lopez	2014 2013	Manhattan District Attorney's Office Legal Aid Society - Criminal Appeals Bureau
John Mark	2014 2013	Brainforest Refugees International Japan
Taly Matiteyahu	2014 2013	Manhattan District Attorney's Office U.S. District Court - Southern District of New York
Oliver McDonald	2014 2013	Office of the Attorney General - Tennessee U.S. Attorney's Office - Northern District of Alabama
William Monks	2014 2013	Earthjustice King's County District Attorney's Office
Neema Nassiri-Motlagh	2014 2013	U.S. Attorney's Office - District of Maryland U.S. District Court - Southern District of New York

honorees for two public interest summers

Ashley Ong	2014 2013	National Children & Youth Law Center, Australia / Law Society of Singapore Singapore Attorney General
Stephanie Persson	2014 2013	Legal Aid Society - Juvenile Rights Division International Bridges to Justice
Rebecca Ramaswamy	2014 2013	Brennan Center for Justice Center for Institutional and Social Change
Arielle Reid	2014 2013	Bronx Defenders - Criminal Defense Project Mecklenberg County Public Defender Office
Xochitl Rodriguez	2014 2013	Vladek, Waldman, Elias & Engelhard Community Lawyers, Inc.
Jason Rosenbaum	2014 2013	Open Society Justice Initiative United States Postal Service Law Department
Joanna Schlingbaum	2014 2013	National Labor Relations Board - Division of Judges Office of the Attorney General - New York
Jessica Seo	2014 2013	Office of the Attorney General - California New York Immigration Coalition
Joo Young Seo	2014 2013	Legal Aid Society Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Jeffrey Skinner	2014 2013	NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia
Jacob Sklar	2014 2013	Bay Area Rapid Transit Office of the City Attorney - Los Angeles
Melina Somoza Bornstein	2014 2013	U.S. Department of Labor - Employee Benefits Security Administration Department Legal Aid Society - Criminal Appeals Bureau
Audrey Son	2014 2013	California Court of Appeal - Second Appellate District International Justice Mission
Holly Stubbs	2014 2013	Yangon Heritage Trust Legal Resources Centre - Capetown
Carrie Tirrell	2014 2013	San Francisco District Attorney's Office Public Information and Need of Knowledge Armenia
Raquel Toledo	2014 2013	Office of the Attorney General - New York Federal Trade Commission
Prateek Vasireddy	2014 2013	MFY Legal Services U.S. Department of Labor

honorees for two public interest summers

Lily-Diem Vo	2014	Texas Civil Rights Project / Office of the Comptroller of the Currency
	2013	Federal Trade Commission
Christopher Wilds	2014	Cuti Hecker Wang
	2013	U.S. Department of Education - Office for Civil Rights
Francis White	2014	Legal Aid Society - Criminal Defense Division
	2013	American Civil Liberties Union - Indiana

honorees for 100 or more hours of pro bono work

Pro Bono Scholars Program

Announced by Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman in his 2014 State of the Judiciary address, the Pro Bono Scholars Program (PBSP) allows students in their final year of law school to devote their last semester to a program that combines a dedicated law school class with performing pro bono service for the underserved. Columbia's Pro Bono Scholars are working under the supervision of professors Alexandra Carter and Shawn Watts providing mediation services to low-income federal employees at the EEOC. The Pro Bono Scholars took the February 2015 New York bar exam and will be admitted very soon after if they qualify.

Michael Rhodes

Xochitl Rodriguez

Ami Shah

Anne Xu

The following 91 students have performed at least 100 hours of pro bono service since their first day at Columbia Law School (*as of April 1*):

Class of 2015

Stephanie Amoako

108 pro bono hours
Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project
Justice for All
New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice
Rightslink

Asif Attarwala

400 pro bono hours
U.S. Bankruptcy Court - Southern District of New York

honorees for 100 or more hours of pro bono work

Elaine Baynham	326 pro bono hours New York State Unified Court System
Brian Benvenisty	400 pro bono hours U.S. Bankruptcy Court - Eastern District of New York
Claire Blakey	100 pro bono hours High School Law Institute Legal Resources Centre - Grahamstown
Mary Bradley	120 pro bono hours U.S. Attorney's Office - Middle District of Tennessee
Caitlyn Carpenter	100 pro bono hours High School Law Institute Legal Resources Centre - Capetown
Ryan Chabot	360 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Southern District of New York
Courtney Chin	128 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Southern District of New York
Min Choi	105 pro bono hours Legal Voice MinKwon Center
Nuzhat Chowdhury	300 pro bono hours American Civil Liberties Union - Georgia
Nathaniel Crider	352 pro bono hours Georgia Capital Defender
Matthew Delgado	368 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Central District of California
Justin DiGennaro	266 pro bono hours Legal Outreach Inc. U.S. District Court - Eastern District of New York
Dennis Fan	350 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Southern District of New York
Kathleen Farley	300 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Eastern District of New York
Lane Feler	115 pro bono hours Court of International Trade

honorees for 100 or more hours of pro bono work

Michael Ferruggia	160 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - New Jersey
Peter Fountain	275 pro bono hours U.S. Bankruptcy Court - Southern District of New York
Jonathan Gelfand	343 pro bono hours Queens County District Attorney's Office
Hannah Geller	315 pro bono hours New York City Law Department - General Litigation
Claire Glasspiegel	161 pro bono hours Legal Aid Society - Juvenile Rights Division
Mark Goldberg	113 pro bono hours Center for the Advancement of Public Integrity Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project NYS Inspector General Sanctuary for Families - Courtroom Advocates Project
Robert Greco	180 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Southern District of New York
David A. Griffin	280 pro bono hours U.S. Bankruptcy Court - Southern District of New York
Kenneth Hagan	144 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Southern District of New York
Daniel Hamburg	240 pro bono hours Bronx Defenders High School Law Institute
Ryan Hartnett	196 pro bono hours New York State Supreme Court
Kevin Houg	361 pro bono hours High School Law Institute U.S. Bankruptcy Court - Central District of California
Jun Hu	368 pro bono hours New York Anti-Trafficking Network U.S. District Court - Southern District of New York
Joseph Kay	266 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Eastern District of New York
Yoojin Kim	400 pro bono hours D.C. Court of Appeals

honorees for 100 or more hours of pro bono work

Devon Klein	119 pro bono hours Commodity Futures Trading Commission
Kelly Knoll	217 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Southern District of New York
Margaret Larkin	400 pro bono hours U.S. Court of Appeals - Federal Circuit
Simon Leen	100 pro bono hours Center for the Advancement of Public Integrity San Jose State University Record Clearance Project
Hannah Lepow	192 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - District of Columbia
Sean Linnehan	300 pro bono hours District Attorney's Office - Middlesex County
Elaine Liu	116 pro bono hours Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) U.S. District Court - Southern District of New York Wisconsin Judicare
Yelizaveta Lozovatskaya	400 pro bono hours U.S. Bankruptcy Court - Southern District of New York
Hugh MacKay	400 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Southern District of New York
Meredith Manning	100 pro bono hours Sanctuary for Families U.S. Attorney's Office - Eastern District of New York
Anthony Marzocca	112 pro bono hours National Campaign for Fair Elections National Lawyers Guild U.S. Attorney's Office - Eastern District of New York
Taly Matiteyahu	115 pro bono hours High School Law Institute Sanctuary for Families - Courtroom Advocates Project
Maura McDevitt	160 pro bono hours Office of the Attorney General - New York
Kaitlin Morrison	148 pro bono hours California Appellate Project Sylvia Rivera Law Project

honorees for 100 or more hours of pro bono work

David Moss	336 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Southern District of New York
William Nahill	153 pro bono hours Georgia Public Defender Standards Council High School Law Institute
Neema Nassiri-Motlagh	480 pro bono hours Consumer Financial Protection Bureau U.S. District Court - Southern District of New York
Corinne Nhaissi	240 pro bono hours New York State Supreme Court - Commercial Division
Lee Parnes	360 pro bono hours U.S. Attorney's Office - Eastern District of New York
Stephanie Persson	140 pro bono hours Legal Resources Centre - Capetown Rightslink
Minji Reem	100 pro bono hours New York State Department of Financial Services Sanctuary for Families - Battered Immigrant Women's Project
Cody A. Ruegger	329 pro bono hours Environmental Defense Fund
Brian Russell	112 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Eastern District of New York
Michael Sala	140 pro bono hours U.S. Attorney's Office - Southern District of New York
Daniel Samovici	300 pro bono hours Federal Trade Commission
Aderayo Sanusi	120 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Eastern District of New York
Emily Schultz	113 pro bono hours High School Law Institute Legal Aid Society - Criminal Appeals Bureau
Alexandria Schumacher	180 pro bono hours High School Law Institute U.S. Attorney's Office - Criminal Division
Rachel Stein	320 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Southern District of New York

honorees for 100 or more hours of pro bono work

Renee Stern	102 pro bono hours Legal Aid Society - Juvenile Rights Division
Sofia G. Syed	112 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Southern District of New York
Danielle Thompson	100 pro bono hours EEOC
Carrie A. Tirrell	168 pro bono hours New York Legal Assistance Group Ombudsman's Office, Legal Analysis Department Public Information and Need of Knowledge Sanctuary for Families Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund
Matthew Vigeant	200 pro bono hours Atlantic Legal Foundation
Lily-Diem Vo	246 pro bono hours Federal Trade Commission Texas Civil Rights Project
Amy Wang	140 pro bono hours African Services Committee Justice for All Morningside Heights Legal Services
Ethan Weinberg	320 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - District of Columbia
Mara Wilber	240 pro bono hours U.S. Court of Appeals - Sixth Circuit
Tiffany Woo	137 pro bono hours Earthjustice
Miaoting Wu	224 pro bono hours New York State Supreme Court
Tal Yahalom	400 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Southern District of New York
Miling Yan	368 pro bono hours U.S. Court of Appeals - Ninth Circuit

honorees for 100 or more hours of pro bono work

Class of 2016

Stephanie Annunziata	300 pro bono hours U.S. Department of Justice - Antitrust Division
Madeleine Brumley	280 pro bono hours Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund
Zoe Carpou	344 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Northern District of California
Daniel Donadio	136 pro bono hours Legal Aid Society - Criminal Defense Division Manhattan Legal Services
Seth Genende	320 pro bono hours U.S. Bankruptcy Court - Southern District of New York
Jeffrey Hammons	380 pro bono hours Environmental Protection Agency
Whitney Hood	149 pro bono hours Sanctuary for Families - Courtroom Advocates Project Human Rights First Spanish Jailhouse Lawyer's Manual
Jessica Luhar	320 pro bono hours Adalah - Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel
William Malone	120 pro bono hours Federal Trade Commission
Brent Nesbitt	156 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Western District of Pennsylvania
Elizabeth Parvis	162 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Eastern District of New York
Morgan Petkovich	238 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Eastern District of California
Pelin Serpin	250 pro bono hours U.S. District Court - Eastern District of New York
Tyler Stahl	110 pro bono hours Texas Civil District Courts

honorees for 100 or more hours of pro bono work

Kirby Tyrrell

177 pro bono hours

Davis Polk Political Asylum Workshop

DNA People's Legal Services

New York Legal Assistance Group

Sanctuary for Families - Immigration Intervention Project

Alice Wang

138 pro bono hours

Software Freedom Law Center

Brian Yin

140 pro bono hours

Columbia Law School Immigrants' Rights Clinic

Legal Resources Centre - Grahamstown

honorees for in-house pro bono projects

Columbia's in-house pro bono projects, some of which are student-run, are ongoing partnerships between Columbia Law School and legal services organizations and/or law firms in the community. In 2014-15, the following in-house projects were led by the students named below:

The Domestic Violence Project

U-Visa Project: Under the supervision of Sanctuary for Families, participants represent undocumented low-income victims of domestic violence seeking a path to US citizenship through a petition for U non-immigrant status. Students are assigned a client and complete the petition application from beginning to end, and learn skills such as interviewing and drafting affidavits. This project includes a thorough training curriculum that exposes students to aspects of both immigration and family law in New York City.

Student Leader: Kirby Tyrrell

Courtroom Advocates Project: Students serve as advocates in Family Court for domestic violence victims. Under the supervision of Sanctuary for Families, students help victims draft and file petitions for Orders of Protection, educate them on their rights and safety precautions, and advocate for them during court appearances.

Student Leader: Abby Shaw

Uncontested Divorce Workshop: Under the supervision of Sanctuary for Families, law students represent clients in obtaining uncontested divorces. Students work in teams of two and are assigned a client; representation includes meeting with the client, drafting divorce documentation, and going to court with the client.

Student Leader: Carrie Guo

Educational Law and Policy Society

Education Advocacy Project (EAP): Students work with Legal Aid attorneys specializing in education issues relating to children in foster care, often utilizing the Birth to Three and Early Intervention Federal Programs.

Student Leader: Nicole Totoriello

The Annenberg Institute for School Reform: The Annenberg Institute for School Reform (AISR) works to promote quality education for all children, especially in urban communities. In New York City, AISR community and youth organizing groups and coalitions work with community groups to provide the tools and knowledge they need to advocate for change in their schools. CLS students conduct legal and policy research on New York City, New York State, and federal education laws and policy—including topics like charter schools and restorative justice practices—to help inform AISR's work with community groups. Students leverage their legal knowledge to assist AISR attorneys and staff in working on education policy recommendations in coordination with AISR's partners.

Student Leader: Nicole Totoriello

High School Law Institute

HSLI is a year-long program that serves low-income high school students from throughout New York City. Columbia Law students teach courses in criminal law, constitutional law, mock trial, and moot court. The year culminates with Graduation, which includes a mock trial competition against our sister organization at NYU.

Student Leader: Eric West

honorees for in-house pro bono projects

Human Rights Law Review – The Jailhouse Lawyer’s Manual

The JLM is a handbook of legal rights and procedures distributed to thousands of prisoners across the country each year by Columbia’s Human Rights Law Review. Student volunteers write, update, edit, and cite check discrete sections of the JLM and its various state supplements.

Student Leader: Caitlyn Carpenter

Legal Clinic for the Homeless

A team of Columbia students staff a legal clinic at a local homeless shelter. Working with attorneys from the City Bar Justice Center, students are assigned a client and advocate for the resolution of various legal issues. Students commonly work on issues related to public assistance, immigration, employment, and family law.

Student Leader: Philip Tan

Mentoring Youth through Legal Education

Legal Outreach: CLS students work with attorneys from major New York firms in coaching New York high school students for constitutional law debates. The year-long constitutional law debate program is a key part of Legal Outreach’s effort to inspire and prepare young people to go to college. Student coaches establish a strong mentoring relationship with individual students through one-on-one tutoring and guidance. They also adjudicate a series of four exciting debates, all conducted at CLS.

Student Leader: Ermelinda Villagomez

Outlaws

NYLAG Pro Bono Project: In the spring, students under the direct supervision of pro bono attorneys from NYLAG and a sponsoring firm spend one evening helping LGBTQ community members complete health care proxies, advance directives, and living wills. These documents are especially important for members of the LGBTQ community because family members who would be making the choices by legal default might not respect their orientation and gender related choices.

Student Leader: Richard D’Amato

Transgender Legal Defense Fund: Through the Transgender Name Change Project, law students assist transgender clients in petitioning to have their named legally changed to match their gender identity under the supervision of attorneys from Sullivan & Cromwell. This involves both helping the client file name change documents and representing them in a hearing before the court. Therefore, students learn valuable written and oral advocacy skills, as well as gaining firsthand experience interacting with clients.

Student Leader: Richard D’Amato

Rightslink

Leveraging the vast research resources available to Columbia students, Rightslink provides free legal research services to human rights groups that lack the capacity or political freedom to conduct their own research. Students interested in human rights gain the opportunity to contribute to research projects covering both domestic and international issues ranging from language discrimination to human trafficking.

Student Leader: Jacqueline Ma

Society for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project: CLS students partner with attorneys at major New York firms in order to help Iraqi families currently living in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, or Jordan. Students work as teams and follow the client’s case through its completion. Students have the opportunity to interview families (telephonically), assist them with the preparation of submissions to and interviews with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration, and the Department of Homeland Security.

Student Leader: Thomas Koester

honorees for in-house pro bono projects

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND): In the United States, children who are undocumented do not have a right to counsel in their proceedings in immigration court. KIND works to provide representation for undocumented children in deportation and other immigration matters. Students participate in client intake sessions and are assigned to work on a case from beginning to end with a small team of two or more attorneys from large law firms and/or the general counsel office of major corporations.

Student Leader: Amy Elmgren

Immigration Equality Project: Students assist attorneys at Immigration Equality with asylum applications for LGBT immigrants. Students write country conditions reports, which support an asylum application by providing information about the applicant's country of origin to corroborate their claim of persecution. Students may work on an entire asylum application over the course of a semester.

Student Leader: Abby Shaw

Suspension Representation Project

The Suspension Representation Project (SRP) has successfully reduced or overturned Superintendents' suspensions of students in virtually every case in which its advocates have been involved. Students review documents provided by the school, interview clients, conduct legal research and appear at suspension hearings where they negotiate with school officials and/or question witnesses.

Student Leaders: Caleb Lowery, Abby Dugan, and Gena Miller

Tenants Rights Project

Students assist attorneys at the Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation and the Goddard-Riverside SRO Law Project in all aspects of low income tenant representation. Types of work include legal research, motion and memorandum drafting, client intake, and court appearances. Cases range from eviction defense, to living condition complaints.

Student Leader: Steve Deutsch

Resilience Advocacy Project

Students work with RAP attorneys to provide information in various areas to youth in schools and youth organizations. Students lead "Know Your Rights" and advocacy workshops for youth around issues ranging from dating violence to reproductive rights, to public benefits and education, in order to help teens build social justice focused youth advocacy clinics in their communities.

Student Leader: Angie Juarbe

Workers' Rights Student Coalition

Students help clients file wage claims for wages that they were not paid, or if they were paid less than minimum wage. This project is in partnership with MFY's Workplace Justice Project.

Student Leader: Ben Setel

honorees for spring break caravans

Groups of Columbia Law students spend spring break working on projects organized by student groups and SJI at legal services and public interest organizations across the U.S. and abroad, providing much-needed legal assistance to underserved communities. In 2015, 104 students went on these caravans led by the students named below:

Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center El Paso, TX

Sponsored by Sponsored by Society for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and Workers' Rights Student Coalition

Las Americas is a non-profit serving the legal needs of low-income immigrants, including refugees and battered women in El Paso, Texas near the port of entry with the second highest number of land crossings into the United States. Students this year worked with the Crime Victims' Visa Coordinator.

Student Leader: Angie Juarbe

Anishinabe Legal Services Cass Lake, MN

Sponsored by the Domestic Violence Project and Native American Law Students Association

Anishinabe Legal Services is a non-profit organization that provides free legal services to low-income individuals living on or near the Leech Lake, Red Lake, and White Earth Reservations in Northwestern Minnesota. Students worked with ALS attorneys to provide direct services to clients, with regard to their civil legal needs and completed other related projects serving the reservation communities, with a particular focus on victims of domestic violence.

Student Leader: Isa Julson

Appalachian Citizens' Law Center Whitesburg, KY

Sponsored by Environmental Law Society

The Environmental Law Society's caravan traveled to Whitesburg, Kentucky to work with the Appalachian Citizens' Law Center in its mission to provide justice for the people of a region deeply affected by extractive industries. The students assisted the Center with a number of legal projects, such as a standing clinic to educate citizens about the requirements necessary to establish standing in environmental cases. Students also performed legal research and drafted sections of briefs for ongoing cases.

Student Leaders: Leo Oppenheimer and Nolan Thomas

ArchCity Defenders St. Louis, MO

Sponsored by Midwest Society

ArchCity Defenders strives to prevent homelessness by providing holistic criminal and civil legal services. Students worked with clients in the St. Louis area on criminal and civil cases by representing low income members of the community. Students focused on working with members of the Ferguson community who are facing violations of their 1st and 4th Amendment rights following the events of last summer.

Student Leader: Yaa Sarpong

The Bronx Defenders Bronx, NY

Sponsored by Criminal Justice Action Network

The Bronx Defenders are credited with pioneering the concept of the "holistic defense." Clients defended by the Bronx Defenders are assigned to a team including attorneys and social workers to help them resolve not just their case but a host of problems with the ultimate goal of keeping them out of jail. Caravan participants worked on one criminal defense project, one family defense project and one civil practice project.

Student Leaders: Debbie Jang and Alexander Reid

honorees for spring break caravans

California Appellate Project of San Francisco San Francisco, CA

Sponsored by Criminal Justice Action Network

The California Appellate Project in San Francisco (CAP-SF) is a non-profit corporation established by the State Bar of California in 1983 as a legal resource center to implement the constitutional right to counsel for indigent persons facing execution. CAP serves the largest population of condemned individuals in the country and is funded primarily by a contract with the Judicial Council of California. Students worked on a variety of projects.

Student Leaders: Debbie Jang and Paul Scheid

California Women's Law Center El Segundo, CA

Sponsored by Columbia Law Women's Association

The California Women's Law Center focuses on Title IX enforcement, equal pay initiatives, educational rights of pregnant teens, and legal assistance to women veterans. Students conducted legal research and drafted memoranda relating to Title IX litigation, compliance reports for Title IX settlements, engaged in policy research and policy brief writing related to equal pay issues and other workplace protections, and drafted memos relating to individual cases.

Student Leader: Brittany Roehrs

DNA People's Legal Services Monument Valley, AZ

Sponsored by Domestic Violence Project and Native American Law Students Association

DNA People's Legal Services is a nonprofit law firm in the Southwestern United States that provides low-income communities with free civil legal services. The organization's name comes from a Navajo phrase meaning "attorneys who work for the economic revitalization of The People." Students participated in direct client services, legal trainings for community members, and clinics targeting specific issues burdening low-income families (such as predatory lending practices, mobile home repossessions, or domestic abuse).

Student Leader: Julia Bedell

Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project, Jordan Amman, Jordan

Sponsored by Columbia Society of International Law and Society for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

Students traveled to Amman, Jordan to provide direct legal assistance to Iraqi and Syrian refugees with the Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP). Students participated in training on how to interview victims of torture and conducted client intake interviews for IRAP with refugees in urgent situations. Students conducted outreach meetings with local NGOs to learn more about the situation facing refugees on the ground in the Middle East, met with representatives from the UN Mission in Amman, and participated in a training hosted by the U.S. government for refugees resettling in the United States.

Student Leader: Tom Koester

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) Houston, TX

Sponsored by Latino/a Law Students Association

Kids In Need of Defense serves as a leading organization for unaccompanied children who enter the U.S. immigration system alone. Students worked with unaccompanied minors and assisted KIND with their screening and intake interviews.

Student Leaders: Jessica Alcantara, Chris Bonilla, and Tanya Martinez

Legal Resources Centre (LRC) Grahamstown, South Africa

Sponsored by Columbia Society of International Law and Education Law & Policy Society

The Legal Resources Centre (LRC) is South Africa's leading public interest law center. The Grahamstown Office is dedicated to using impact litigation to help children obtain their right to basic education. Students traveled to South Africa to aid the LRC in aid of their work on the right to education as well as land rights. Students conducted research and drafted legal documents to help the LRC institute legal action.

Student Leaders: Tracy Zhang and Anya Olsen

honorees for spring break caravans

Miami-Dade Public Defender Service Miami, FL

Sponsored by Criminal Justice Action Network

MDPD strives to have a public defender's office that is a national model, provide quality legal representation, and treat clients with dignity and respect. Students split their time between helping MDPD update their training sessions and training materials in DUI cases and observing trials, then participating in feedback sessions between the training attorneys and the trial attorneys.

Student Leaders: Debbie Jang and Seth Fromer

Moroccan Association for Human Rights Rabat, Morocco

Sponsored by Law in Africa Student Society and Rightslink

The Moroccan Association for Human Rights acts for the preservation of human dignity, the respect for all human rights in their universality, and in the protection and promotion of those rights. Students conducted an audit of the trials of several Moroccan human rights activists that took place over the past three years – with the goal of objectively assessing what, if any, irregularities were present throughout the trials.

Student Leader: Glory Nwaugbala

Myanmar Justice for All (JFA) Yangon, Myanmar

Sponsored by the Columbia Society of International Law

Founded in 2011 by a group of well-known lawyers in Myanmar, JFA is an independent civil society organization committed to the advancement of human rights and the rule of law. JFA works in partnership with civil society organizations to promote human rights and improve legal mechanisms for rights protection and enforcement. A member of the Myanmar Legal Aid Network (MLAW), JFA conducts a variety of activities related to advancing access to justice and rights awareness, including pro bono legal aid to those who cannot afford a lawyers and training seminars on constitutional law, citizens' rights, democracy, land rights, and international human rights law. Students contributed to numerous JFA initiatives in the context of Burma's historic democratic transition.

Student Leader: Alisa Romney

New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice (BLSA) New Orleans, LA

Sponsored by Black Law Students Association

The New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice (NOWCRJ) is dedicated to organizing workers across race and industry to build the power and participation of workers and communities. Students engaged in legal work touching on areas of employment law, immigration law, and housing law, doing legal research and drafting legal memos, working directly with the community residents that NOWCRJ serves.

Student Leader: Hager Franklin

Paso Del Norte Civil Rights Project El Paso, TX

Sponsored by Society for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (SIRR) and Workers' Rights Student Coalition

The Paso del Norte Civil Rights Project provides legal representation for victims of civil rights violations and victims of domestic violence. Students worked on a variety of legal pleadings and research memos, including helping to draft declarations for VAWA/U-Visa packets, assisting with requests for evidence, and investigating complex immigration issues, including some involving civil rights issues.

Student Leaders: Angie Juarbe and Matthew Doyle

Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia Washington, DC

Sponsored by Criminal Justice Action Network

The Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia (PDS) provides and promotes quality legal representation to indigent adults and children facing a loss of liberty in the District of Columbia and thereby protects society's interest in the fair administration of justice. Students worked on a variety of projects including short term parole appeals, research and writing assignments within the context of the appellate practice, work with the general counsel, and generalized trial assignments.

Student Leaders: Debbie Jang and Eric Johnson

honorees for spring break caravans

San Jose State University Record Clearance Project San Jose, CA

Sponsored by Society for Chinese Law

Students were trained in expungement law and helped clients to complete petitions for dismissals of all eligible criminal convictions in court. Law students worked in partnership with Record Clearance Project , and assisted students interviewing their clients and completing their cases. Students attended an expungement court hearing and engaged in discussions with former clients, state and federal judges, criminal justice officials and others who highlighted the importance of clearing individuals' criminal records.

Student Leaders: Allison Peck and Wanjie Ren

Wisconsin Judicare Wausau, WI

Sponsored by Midwest Society and Native American Law Students Association

Students worked with Judicare staff attorneys to conduct a series of Will Clinics for American Indians residing throughout Wisconsin. To prepare for the Clinics, students received training on Indian Law, Basic Estate Planning, the American Indian Probate Reform Act, and the procedures and processes for the Clinics. After training, students traveled with staff attorneys to different reservations or tribal communities in Wisconsin to conduct day-long will clinics.

Student Leaders: Yaa Sarpong and Jacob Grubman

public interest peer mentors

The Peer Mentoring Program provides first-year students with the opportunity to have fun and learn the inside scoop about classes and faculty from second- and third-year students. These students have made themselves available as peer mentors to first-year students interested in public interest careers, classes, and activities.

Jessica Alcantara

Josiah Bethards

Paul Chander

Katie Coulson

Madiba Dennie

Lane Feler

Bianca Figueroa-Santana

Luis Hoyos

Mayra Joachin

Kassie Jordan

Chris Lee

Elaine Liu

Avni Mehta

Keerthana Nimmala

Allison Peck

Dan Pohlman

Arielle Reid

Joanna Schlingbaum

Rachel Shapiro

Sarah Sloan

Danielle Thompson

Kirby Tyrrell

David Ullman

Lily Vo

Nicholas Wiltsie

Brian Yin

honorees for public interest philanthropy

The following students led Columbia Law student campaigns to raise funds for public interest legal work by their fellow students and/or grassroots legal organizations.

Dean's Cup

Zila Acosta
Erensu Altan
Zoe Carpou
Wendy Louise Green
Zain Haq
Srilekha Jayanthi
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philanthropic supporters of pro bono, summer, and postgraduate work

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Mr. and Mrs. John K. Abely

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Columbia Law Students

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Charles J. Conroy, Esq.

Barry J. Cutler, Esq.

Professor David Phillips

and Columbia University Institute for
the Study of Human Rights

Peter S. Davis, Esq.

Davis, Polk & Wardwell

Deans Cup

The Honorable Dickinson R. Debevoise

R. Bruce Dickinson, Esq.

District of Columbia Alumni Association

The Earth Institute Student Travel Grant
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Ms. Linda A. Fairstein

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Nobuhisa and Marcia Ishizuka, Esq.

Jennifer Hadley and The Themis Bar Review

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past honorees

In past years, SJI has honored the following individuals for their leadership, achievements in their respective fields, and for serving as inspirational models for Columbia Law Students seeking to pursue public interest and pro bono work during the course of their careers.

- 2014 Theodore M. Shaw, CLS '79,
Professor of Professional Practice, Columbia University School of Law
- 2013 Lee Gelernt, CLS '88,
Deputy Director of the ACLU's Immigrants' Rights Project;
Director of the Project's Program on Access to the Courts
- 2012 Camilla Taylor, CLS '96,
National Marriage Project Director, Lambda Legal
- 2011 Robin Alexander, CLS '78
Director of International Affairs, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers
of America
- 2010 Catherine Albisa, CLS '89
Executive Director & Co-Founder, National Economic & Social Rights Initiative
- 2009 Juan Cartagena, CLS '81
General Counsel, Community Service Society for New York
- 2008 Michael Rothenberg
Executive Director, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
- 2007 Karen Lash
Senior Program Counsel, Equal Justice Works;
National Pro Bono Coordinator, Mississippi Center for Justice
- 2006 Bill Goodman
Legal Director of the Center for Constitutional Rights
- 2005 Shavar Jeffries, CLS '99,
Associate Professor of Law at Seton Hall Law School
- 2004 Adriene Holder, CLS '91
Attorney-in-Charge of the Legal Aid Society Greater Harlem Office
- 2003 10th Anniversary Gala

"SEXUAL AND
REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS ARE
HUMAN RIGHTS. THEY ARE
NOT NEW RIGHTS, AND THEY
ARE NOT OPTIONAL."

-NAVI PILLAY

UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (2008-2014)