

## Fellowships

### **Annual SPILF-Stanford Law School Public Interest Fellowship**

For over a decade, the annual SPILF-SLS Public Interest Fellowship enabled recipients to work full-time for a year in a law-related endeavor designed to further the public interest. The fellowship included a one-year salary, benefits that the sponsoring organization would ordinarily provide to an employee at the recipient's level, and a free bar course in the recipient's state of choice. In 2014, Stanford Law School chose to adopt this fellowship program, and now plans on directly funding 2-3 public interest positions for graduating 3L students and alumni.



***Shira Levine: 2013 SPILF Fellow***

Shira grew up in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and attended college at the University of Michigan. She majored in history and Latin American and Caribbean studies. During college, she studied and volunteered in Cuba, Honduras, and Mexico. After graduating, Shira worked as a bilingual first grade teacher for Teach for America and taught predominantly immigrant students in the Bronx. Shira spent a year in Israel where she worked with migrant workers from Nigeria and the Philippines, and then joined the 2008 Obama field campaign in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Throughout law school, Shira participated in the Immigrants' Rights Clinic and Community Law Clinic. These experiences provided skills and perspectives that will benefit the clients she will represent during her fellowship. Shira was a summer law clerk with the Legal Aid Society–Employment Law Center, where she discovered her passion for representing low-wage immigrant workers. She is currently clerking for the Honorable Harry Pregerson of the Ninth Circuit, and is thrilled to be returning to

LAS-ELC as a SPILF fellow next year. As a fellow, Shira will represent subcontracted immigrant workers in state and federal court who have been paid less than minimum wage. Her project's goal is to stem wage theft in low-wage industries, including the janitorial, security guard, warehouse, and construction industries. To that end, Shira will establish a walk-in clinic at the offices of the California Department of Labor Standards Enforcement in Oakland and San Francisco, and she will litigate the cases of workers who seek to obtain remedies through the court system.



***Meredith Johnson: 2013 SPILF Fellow***

Meredith grew up in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She graduated with a B.A. in mathematics and English from St. Olaf College in 2006. After college, she volunteered for a year at a nonprofit youth center in a low-income part of Montevideo, Uruguay. Listening to her students and their mothers tell their stories sparked Meredith's interest in advocating for under-served populations. She returned to Minneapolis in 2007 and worked for the environment program of The McKnight Foundation, a grant-making organization, for two years before starting law school at Stanford. During law school, Meredith co-led the Domestic Violence Pro Bono Program, worked in the Immigrants' Rights Clinic, and was active in Women of Stanford Law, the Stanford Law and Policy Review, and the Shaking the Foundations Conference on Progressive Lawyering. She did summer internships at the National Women's Law Center and the ACLU Immigrants' Rights Project, as well as an externship at Legal Services for Children. Meredith is currently a law clerk for the Honorable Richard A. Paez on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. As a fellow, Meredith will advocate on behalf of immigrant women farm-workers who are sexually harassed at work or retaliated against for reporting harassment. She will be based at The Impact Fund, in Berkeley, California, and her project will include community outreach and education, legal assistance and referrals, the development of training materials, and investigation into

whether large-scale litigation could help reduce the sexual harassment and violence that many farm-worker women face in the workplace.



***Christy Holstege: 2012 SPILF Fellow***

Christy grew up in Sacramento, California. She graduated with high honors from the beautiful University of California at Santa Barbara. At Stanford Law School, Christy established Stanford's Law Students for Reproductive Justice chapter and acted as Co-Chair for two years. She also served as the Secretary of Stanford Law Association and a managing editor of training for the Stanford Journal of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. While at SLS, Christy interned at the ACLU of San Diego and Imperial Counties and the Center For Reproductive Rights. Throughout law school, Christy enjoyed volunteering with the Domestic Violence Pro Bono Program and working at the Stanford Community Law Clinic, where she became committed to providing legal aid for the most marginalized communities.

As a fellow, Christy will independently establish a legal clinic within a domestic violence shelter-based agency in California's rural Coachella Valley. Through the fellowship, she will provide direct legal services to women in the shelter, assisting victims with permanent restraining orders, child custody and visitation, and immigration relief. Christy will also organize a network of pro bono lawyers, mobilize private attorneys to serve domestic violence victims, and design community education for victims and service providers. She is hoping to substantially improve access to justice for domestic violence survivors who currently cannot obtain any legal assistance in the area.



***Stephanie Klitsch: 2012 SPILF Fellow***

Stephanie was born and raised in Endwell, NY. In 2007, she graduated from Cornell University, where she majored in Policy Analysis and Management with a concentration in Family and Social Welfare. Upon graduating, Stephanie worked as an eighth grade science teacher with Teach for America in Charlotte, NC for two years. During her time at Stanford Law School, Stephanie participated in the Youth and Education Law Project, served on the Environmental Law Journal, and worked with Fresh Lifelines for Youth, educating at-risk youth about the law and consequences of crime. She also interned with the National Center for Youth Law, Council for Children's Rights, and Legal Services for Children. As a fellow, Stephanie has returned to Charlotte, NC, to advocate for children in the same community in which she taught. She is working at the Council for Children's Rights, and the goal of her project is to improve educational opportunities for foster youth with emotional and behavioral disabilities through client representation and community education.



***Michael Caesar: 2011 SPILF Fellow***

Michael is a native of Southern California, having been born in Los Angeles and also growing up part-time in San Diego. He was a graduate from the University of California at Berkeley in 2001. After graduation, he worked as an assistant at the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund before traveling for two years in Central America. It was here, primarily in Costa Rica, that Michael became more attached to doing immigrant and refugee rights work. He went on to found and manage the Immigrant Rights Program at the Equal Rights Center in Washington, DC for three years before coming to law school. At Stanford, he has participated in the Immigration Pro Bono program and the International Human Rights and Development Clinic, and has co-chaired BLSA's community services program for two years. He has also worked for the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia and the Center for Justice and Accountability. As a fellow, Michael will be working at the Impact Fund in Berkeley, CA. His project focuses on the federal government's I-9 audit program (known as "silent raids") and works to protect those who have been refused employment or wrongfully terminated because of their citizenship status or national origin.



***Maureen Keffer: 2011 SPILF Fellow***

Maureen was born and raised in Hanover, Pennsylvania and graduated from Georgetown University in 2002. She worked for several summers during and after college with the State of Pennsylvania's Migrant Education Program, providing educational support to children of migrant farmworker families. After college, Maureen moved to Oaxaca, Mexico, where she worked for five years in local organizations promoting economic development and indigenous rights in remote rural communities. At Stanford, she has been active in the Community Law Clinic and served as Co-President of Outlaw, Stanford's LGBT law student organization. As a fellow in the Salinas office of California Rural Legal Assistance, Maureen will represent indigenous Mexicans and other farmworkers who are victims of human trafficking and labor issues. Her project will help victims obtain immigration relief and combat illegal employment practices through litigation and education of police and prosecutors.

***Michael Kaufman: 2010 SPILF Fellow***

Michael's project at the ACLU of Southern California seeks to improve inhumane and unlawful conditions at Southern California immigration detention facilities. In the past decade there has been an explosive growth in immigration detention, forcing thousands of immigrants to fight their removal cases in remote detention facilities with limited access to legal assistance. Worse still, many immigrants are detained for years at a time in appalling conditions, in violation of their constitutional and statutory rights. Michael will document conditions problems, represent detainees, and conduct impact litigation and advocacy to address three pervasive problems in the immigration detention system: lack of access to representation and legal materials, inadequate medical care and prolonged detention.

***A note from former SPILF-SLS Fellow Jess Oats on her year in Atlanta:***

As a SPILF-SLS fellow at the Southern Center for Human Rights in Atlanta, Georgia, I am writing direct appeals for indigent men facing the death penalty in Alabama. I am working to create systemic change in the level of capital appellate practice in Alabama while providing direct legal services to a population whose prospects for competent representation are otherwise bleak or nonexistent. Without the funding provided by SPILF and SLS, I would not be able to do this work. I am deeply grateful for the generosity of the donors – thank you so, so much for making this experience possible and helping me launch a lifelong career in the public interest.

***The inaugural SPILF-SLS Fellow (2008) Thomas Nosewicz looks back on his year in New Orleans:***

The SPILF-SLS fellowship funded my work from August 2008 to October 2009 as a Staff Attorney in the Special Litigation Department of the Orleans Public Defenders in New Orleans, Louisiana. This was an exciting year to be at OPD because the public defender in New Orleans underwent tremendous changes following Hurricane Katrina and what was once a part-time program is now a full-time office with staff attorneys, investigators and a commitment to client-centered representation. My project was designed to take advantage of Louisiana’s robust interlocutory appellate practice known as “supervisory writs” to quickly move recurring problems from the trial courts to resolution by the appellate courts. The goal was systemic change and was, in large parts, successful. A full testimonial from Tommy is included below.

*“I was able to accomplish many of the fellowship’s goals. None of this would have been possible without Stanford’s generosity and I can’t think of a better way to have begun my career as an attorney.”*

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Through sheer luck, the year culminated in my briefing and arguing a case before the Louisiana Supreme Court about one of the problems the fellowship aimed to address. The issue presented was how long a warrantless arrestee could be held before a judge reviewed the arrest. Though both United States

Supreme Court precedent and Louisiana law long ago established a 48 hour limit on such detention, the rule was nonetheless routinely ignored in Orleans Parish. The fellowship allowed me to take one of the many cases with this issue to the Louisiana Supreme Court and convince the Court to hear it on full briefing and oral argument. I was able to do the argument and, just a few weeks later, the Court ruled in our favor. The decision has resulted in the restructuring of parts of magistrate court, days of coverage in the local paper and, hopefully, increased credibility for the public defender's office as a whole.

I was also able to leave the office with a number of new resources addressing problems that came up every day in court. Thanks to the fellowship, the Orleans Public Defenders now have Louisiana-specific practice guides for searches incident to arrest, proper service of notice to come to court for defendants on bond, speedy trial rights, and other crucial areas of law.

In addition to these special projects, I was also the sole attorney or second-chair for clients accused of a range of crimes from marijuana possession to second-degree murder. This allowed me to litigate dozens of issues from the state's burden of proof at a preliminary examination to the legality of New Orleans's post-Hurricane Gustav curfew. I also litigated a case that resulted in the City Attorney for New Orleans agreeing to no longer prosecute people under the City's patently unconstitutional "begging" law, which had been used to charge more than a thousand people annually.

Aside from producing court decisions and manuals, my experience also suggests a model that the Orleans Public Defenders can use in the future. At the oral argument for the warrantless arrestee case, one of the justices remarked that the Louisiana Supreme Court had been dealing with a flood of writs on the issue it was considering. Those writs had all come from the public defender's office and our tenacity seemed to help convince the court to finally review a case on the merits. But without the fellowship, which freed me from the crushing caseloads of most other staff attorneys and allowed me ample time to become familiar with Louisiana's robust interlocutory appeal procedures, the deluge wouldn't have happened.

After a year, I was able to accomplish many of the fellowship's goals. None of this would have been possible without Stanford's generosity and I can't think of a better way to have begun my career as an attorney.