

ABF American Bar Foundation  
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# RESEARCHING LAW

AN ABF UPDATE

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**OPENING DOORS TO INQUIRY:**  
**THE SUMMER RESEARCH DIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM**

# Opening Doors to Inquiry:

## The Summer Research Diversity Fellowship Program

“Meeting and interacting with students from different backgrounds and different universities was broadening; talking to my peers about their interests and plans was very affirming.

And working with my faculty mentor and being so closely involved in the research process helped me to better appreciate all that went into the final research product,” recalls Erika George, who spent eight weeks at the American Bar Foundation in 1991 as an undergraduate Summer Research Diversity Fellow. Then only in its fourth year, the Summer Research Diversity Fellowship (SRDF) Program was initiated in 1988 by the ABF as way to help broaden the participation of minority students in empirical legal scholarship and to encourage them to pursue careers in that area. Like the almost one hundred Fellows in the years since, George was an accomplished, energetic, and inquisitive undergraduate with an interest in law and society,

who found an encouraging and intellectually stimulating environment at the ABF. Now a Professor of Law at the S.J. Quinney College of Law at the University of Utah, George identifies her intellectual “home” as the “Law and Society” community, which, at its core, is about another kind of diversity—that of bringing a variety of intellectual perspectives to bear on the study of law.

The summer of 2011 marked the 24th annual session of the program, which aims to give undergraduate students an in-depth introduction to the rewards and demands of a research-oriented career in the field of law and social science. Admission to the program is highly competitive; four students, out of hundreds who apply from colleges and universities across

the country, are invited to come to the ABF for the summer. Each student is assigned to an ABF Research Professor who involves the student in the design and implementation of the Professor’s research project and who acts as mentor during the student’s tenure. While the students work primarily as research assistants, they also attend a series of seminars conducted by ABF Research Professors who acquaint the students with their diverse research projects.

In addition to their ABF research involvement, the students are exposed to various legal career options and observe the justice system in action in the city of Chicago. A series of field trips provides the students with an opportunity to talk with legal actors in the real-world environments



*The 2011 Summer Research Diversity Fellows: Left to right: Alvita Akiboh, Arlene Rivera, Wintre Foxworth, Chris Han*

that are the focus of the ABF's empirical research. In past years the students have visited, among others, the offices of Cook County's Public Defender, Public Guardian, and State's Attorney, the Illinois Solicitor General, the juvenile and criminal courts, and have met with individual private practitioners and judges.

## 2011 SUMMER RESEARCH DIVERSITY FELLOWS

**Alvita Akiboh**, a native of Indianapolis, Indiana, is a rising senior at Indiana University at Bloomington. She is pursuing a B.A. in History with minors in Economics, Political Science, and Spanish. She is particularly interested in the history of United States foreign relations.

Alvita is a member of the Hudson Holland Honors Program, a program that promotes academic excellence as well as community service in minority undergraduate students. She is also a member of the Hutton Honors College and a Herbert Presidential Scholar at Indiana University. Alvita is involved in honors societies outside of IU as well, such as the National Society of Collegiate Scholars and the Alpha Lambda Delta and Phi Eta Sigma Honors Societies. For her continued academic excellence, she has been named a Founders Scholar every year thus far during her undergraduate study. After graduation, she plans to pursue a Ph.D. in History. Alvita gained research experience working with Director and Research Professor Robert L. Nelson

on the After the JD project.

**Wintre Foxworth**, a native of Chesapeake, Virginia, is a rising senior at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville who is majoring in Government and African-American and African Studies, with a minor in Sociology. Various fields of law intrigue her, but she is particularly interested in criminal law and the political and social consequences of disenfranchisement. At the University, she is an Echols Scholar, an honor only given to a select group of students in the College of Arts and Sciences, and a Ridley Scholar, a scholarship given to African-American students of the highest academic caliber. Upon graduation, Wintre will attend law school and explore the

multitude of paths within the legal field. Wintre worked with Research Professor Dylan Penningroth this summer examining the engagement of African-Americans in the civil court system, ranging from the Civil War through the Great Migration.

**Chris Han**, a native of Castro Valley, California, is a rising junior at the University of California, Berkeley. He is majoring in Political Science with a focus in International Relations. He is interested in ways that the legal system reflects such processes and institutions as poverty and religion, in particular, the quality of legal services provided to the poor and the influence of religious lobby groups on interpretations of the Constitution. Chris has interned at the San Francisco District Attorney's office, where he was a liaison between victims of crime and Assistant District Attorneys, and has engaged in crisis intervention for victims of domestic violence and robbery. Following graduation, Chris plans to go to law school, after which he hopes to work at a lobbying firm or the Department of Justice. Chris worked with Faculty Fellow Christopher Schmidt this summer on Schmidt's research project "Creating Brown v. Board of Education: Ideology and Constitutional Change, 1945-1955."

**Arlene Rivera** is a rising senior at the Pennsylvania State University in University Park, PA, double major-

ing in Psychology and Crime, Law, and Justice. Arlene, who hails from Palmetto Bay, Florida, is a member of the Schreyer Honors College, and is a Paterno Fellow—an honors program within the College of Liberal Arts. At Penn State Arlene is a research assistant for a study exploring defendant disparities in Pennsylvania death penalty cases, and another study evaluating the local DUI court. Arlene also assists with research at Penn State's Laboratory for Personality, Psychopathology, and Psychotherapy Research. After graduation, Arlene plans to attend law school and focus on international law. Arlene worked with Research Professor John Hagan this summer on his research on crime in pre- and post-invasion Iraq.

### AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE AT THE ABF

*Researching Law* editor Katharine W. Hannaford sat down with ABF Research Professor Stephen Daniels, who has been directing the academic component of the program.

**KWH:** Steve, what is unique about the Summer Research Diversity Fellowship Program at the ABF?

**SD:** The program brings bright, motivated undergraduates from diverse backgrounds together for eight weeks and provides them the chance to do real research with an experienced researcher. It's an opportunity to not

only experience the nuts and bolts of research, but also to observe and understand the thinking that goes into a project, and to see how the process unfolds.

**KWH:** What was your role in the program this summer?

**SD:** The students learn how to do research by working closely with their faculty mentor. Usually, the experience hooks them; in short order they "dig in." I augment this experience by organizing the informal faculty seminars where other ABF researchers speak to the students about the questions that interest them, about what motivated them; how they got interested. I aim to make sure the students are exposed to as wide as possible a range of the work that is done at the ABF. In addition, non-ABF researchers, others involved in the legal system in Chicago, and SRDF alumni come to the ABF to talk with the students. It's important for the students to see that there is no set way to come up with interesting questions. Undergraduates aren't usually exposed to these insights into the process of research.

**KWH:** And the students have their own seminar as well?

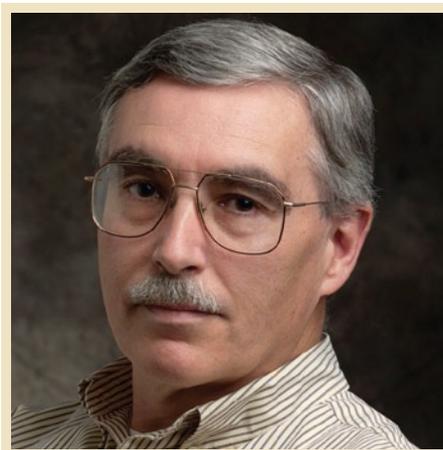
**SD:** Yes, I put together readings for the students with the same aim of showing them the broad range of possibilities for research. Readings can range from a scholarly *Law and Society Review* article to a *New Yorker* article on, say, healthcare policy.

The students read and discuss these articles not so much for their content as for their framing of questions and ways of getting answers. We don't focus so much on reading legal cases; when we do read cases, we always add empirical data to the mix. The seminar can be adapted to students' interests; it is quite flexible. There is no set syllabus, but there is a set of broad goals.

**KWH:** The program is not purely academic, though. Can you tell me more about some of the other experiences the students have?

**SD:** The program incorporates three main elements: the academic perspective, which we've just discussed, the practice perspective, and direct experience. To get a sense of the varieties of legal practice the students visit Chicago law firms and other practice settings. For many summers ABF Life Fellow Graham Grady, a partner at the Chicago office of K & L Gates, has graciously hosted them at his firm. In addition, this summer the students visited and talked with attorneys at the Criminal Law Clinic at Chicago-Kent College of Law. Dan Coyne, clinical law professor at Chicago-Kent and an ABF Fellow, gave a presentation. From this visit they learned about the law student experience of clinics and also about criminal defense work in general. Every summer the students have the direct experience of visiting Chicago's criminal court building on the city's west side at 26th Street and Califor-

nia Avenue, part of one of the largest unified court systems in the world. At 26th and California they have a tour and meet with a judge and observe a trial. These are just a few examples of the kinds of experiences the students have. The three elements—academic, practice, and direct experience—together make for a very rich learning experience.



*ABF Research Professor Stephen Daniels*

**KWH:** What role does ABF's location in the city of Chicago play in the program?

**SD:** A program like this will only work in a large, diverse city. There is a great array of activity in the legal realm in Chicago every day. I tell the students "look out the back door" and see what's around, take full advantage of the urban setting in which they find themselves. The students work hard, but they are not graded; the program is not about performance, it is about experience and exposure. There's no question about these students' academic abilities—we've selected the best, and they

take full advantage of what we offer. They've earned this opportunity to learn in a grade-free environment. In their time off the students are free to explore any aspect of the city that interests them from politics to sports to theater to the built environment. Every year they take full advantage of the urban setting.

**KWH:** Is there anything else you'd like our readers to know about the Summer Research Diversity Fellowship program?

**SD:** Though research forms the core of the program, not all program alumni will go on to become academics. At the most general level, the program is about affecting future leaders in some area of the law. Much of the research that's being done at the ABF is about exploring how we think about issues of diversity and equality and the law, and we want to expose the students to different ways of addressing these questions. If we can have an impact at the most general level on how these students think about the law, that's important. 

## IN SUPPORT OF THE PROGRAM

In 2011 the Summer Research Diversity Program has been supported by generous donations from:

Seyfarth Shaw LLP

The Lloyd A. Fry Foundation

The National Science Foundation



*In Memoriam*  
*Harle Garth Montgomery*

Harle Garth Montgomery, a major benefactor of the Summer Research Diversity Fellowship program, passed away on October 24, 2010 at the age of 92 at her home in La Jolla, California. Born in Beaumont, Texas she grew up in La Jolla, attending public school there. After attending Stanford University, she worked as a journalist in the United States, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, interviewing figures such as King Hussein, John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. After marrying her second husband, Kenneth F. Montgomery, a Chicago lawyer, she dedicated herself to charitable causes in the areas of social justice, education, politics, and the arts. In 1993, she and her husband established the Chicago-based Kenneth and Harle Montgomery Foundation to support charitable causes in these areas. Mrs. Montgomery was also active in Democratic national politics, campaigning for Adlai Stevenson, Jimmy Carter, and Barack Obama, among many others.

In 1999 and 2000 the Montgomery Foundation contributed a total of \$100,000 to the Summer Research Diversity Fellowship Program.

In addition to the Bar Foundation's Summer Research Diversity Fellowship Program, the Montgomery Foundation supports the Kenneth and Harle Montgomery Professorship in Public Interest Law at Stanford Law School, the Thomas F. Geraghty Fund for Juvenile Justice at Northwestern University School of Law, and the Montgomery House at Dartmouth College, a residential base for visiting scholars.

Her nephew, Bryant Garth, directed the ABF from 1990 to 2004. According to him, "Harle wanted to do something to help the Foundation, and it was clear that the Summer Research Diversity Fellowship was the program that perfectly fit her commitment to equal opportunity and education. She was very pleased with the achievements of this program."

# The Summer Research Diversity Fellows Alumni

Since its inception in 1988 the program has hosted 98 undergraduates (71 women, 27 men) from 55 colleges and universities, who hail from 29 states as well as Puerto Rico, Hong Kong and Papua New Guinea. Of the 98 students who have participated in the program, about 53 percent identified themselves as African American, 19.4 percent Hispanic/Latino, 19.4 percent Asian, South Asian, biracial, or other, 7.15 percent Puerto Rican, and one person identified herself as Native American.

While many Summer Research Diversity Fellowship alumni go on to academic careers in the social sciences and law, many others have chosen to pursue careers as legal practitioners, to work in government, social policy, or business. Of the 86 alumni through 2008, ABF has been able to identify the work or study areas of 71. Of the 71, 18 percent were working in law firms, 13 percent had careers in academia, mostly in law, 13 per-

cent were currently graduate students, mostly in JD, joint JD/PhD or JD/MA programs, 30 percent were using their legal skills in business settings, 8 percent were working in government, 7 percent were working in the policy arena, 3 percent were working in the non-governmental non-profit sector and 3 percent were working in health care or health care policy.

## ALUMNI PROFILE:

### ERIKA GEORGE

(SRDF 1991), Professor, S.J. Quinney College Of Law, University Of Utah

Erika George, then a rising senior majoring in Politics, Economics, Rhetoric & Law at the University of Chicago, spent the summer of 1991 at the Bar Foundation as a Summer Research Diversity Fellow. Now a Professor of Law at the S. J. Quinney College of Law, University of Utah, George studies the intersection of globalization and human rights, addressing issues such as gender

violence and gender equality, socioeconomic rights, cultural pluralism and environmental justice. Her current research focuses on the responsibility of multinational corporations to respect international human rights, and movements to hold corporations accountable for the influence of their practices on human rights.

Professor George is currently at work on a book, *Incorporating Rights: Human Rights, Corporate Responsibility and Conscious Community*, which, she says, “will evaluate the potential of global industry’s efforts to fill an existing regulatory void concerning corporate responsibility to respect human rights with voluntary codes of conduct.” Using three different case studies from three different regions as illustrations, George will argue that “shifting demands of a select citizen consumer community can drive corporations to change the way in which they conduct business to better align with respect for human rights and reasonable environmen-

tal use.” In addition to her research, Professor George teaches courses in Constitutional Law, Civil Procedure, International Human Rights and International Environmental Law.

George, a native of Chicago Heights, Illinois, received her J.D. from Harvard Law School as well as a Master’s degree in International Relations from the University of Chicago. Before joining the University of Utah law faculty in 2003, she clerked for Judge William T. Hart of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, worked as a litigation associate, and as a consultant to Human Rights Watch. Currently, she serves as special counsel to the Women’s Rights Division of Human Rights Watch. Among other roles, George also serves on the Executive Committee of the U.S. Department of State Public-Private Partnership for Justice Reform in Afghanistan. She has published in the *California Law Review*, the *Michigan Journal of International Law*, and the annual proceedings of the American Society of International Law. In 2008, George received the S. J. Quinney College of Law’s Early Career Award.

This past summer Erika George was in residence at the Bar Foundation as a Visiting Scholar, and will visit in future summers on an ongoing basis. In addition to working on her research this summer, Professor George shared a brownbag lunch with the undergraduate Fellows, “where I talked a little about my work and

listened to what was on their minds,” she states. According to George, “it was very interesting seeing them at the stage they’re at, hearing about their plans, as well as their uncertainties. It was beneficial and energizing



Professor Erika George  
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S.J. Quinney College of Law

to me to see how eager and excited and curious they were, how they were in a space of exploration. It is OK to be uncertain, as uncertainty will get them to ask questions. To a person, they all want to make an impact; the ability to ask and frame questions will help them to do that wherever they go.”

When asked about the progress of diversity in the legal academy and legal profession in general, George shares that she sees room for improvement. “There are costs and consequences for not having a diversity of

perspectives that have a long lasting impact on the profession,” George comments. “What we need now are people who are informed and conscientious about difference and inclusion and exclusion, and about how law and policy can help to elevate people or can continue to exacerbate existing inequalities,” she adds.

George notes that, by nature, we tend to connect to those who are quite similar to us, who share similar backgrounds, values and perspectives. “And connections, of course, are crucial to professional development,” says George. “It’s not going to happen by accident; it is not random. Because people have a natural tendency to tap into the social and professional networks of others who are like themselves, to move towards greater diversity you have to make an active effort to be inclusive.”

As George concludes, “In an era of increasing economic inequality, we need a kind of ‘affirmative action for access.’ It is important to invite diverse people into the social networks of scholars and legal professionals. The ABF’s SRDF program is one potential avenue to help improve the situation at the very beginning of young peoples’ professional development. The SRDF program creates “access” to the scholars and ongoing activities at the Bar Foundation in a way that opens up possibilities for the summer fellows.” 

# Program Alumni

## and their Undergraduate Institutions 1988 ~ 2010

**1988**

Andrea Lynn Caver  
Northwestern University

Calita LaTanya Elston  
Northwestern University

James Scott McKee  
Northwestern University

David P. White  
Grinnell College

**1989**

George Comer  
University of Chicago

Kim McCullough  
Trinity College

Deborah S. Skolnik  
Wesleyan University

Lisa Ann Stewart  
Yale University

**1990**

Otto Beatty, III  
Morehouse College

Theresa M. Cerda  
Northwestern University

Karen Kathleen Harris  
Princeton University

Victor Andres Reinoso  
Georgetown University

**1991**

Julie M. Bernstein  
Northwestern University

Erika Renee George  
University of Chicago

James Gleason Hurt  
Bowdoin College

Akilah E. Kamaria  
Penn State University

**1992**

Mario-Florentino Cuéllar  
Harvard University

Tiffany Rae Davis  
Northwestern University

Gabriella C. Gonzalez  
Harvard University

Lori C. Thomas  
Penn State University

**1993**

Christine Marie Garza  
Northeastern Illinois University

Sherri Jennifer Lee  
Spelman College

Rhonda Joy Mundhenk  
Westmont College

Trevor Howard Peterson  
Northwestern University

Tom Isaac Romero  
University of Denver

**1994**

Martha P. Escobedo  
California Polytechnic University

Hosea H. Harvey  
Dartmouth College

Corinna B. Polk  
University of Southern California

Melanie E. Roberson  
Wesleyan University

**1995**

Daniel J. Acosta  
Yale University

Rafael Cox-Alomar  
Cornell University

Danielle R. Holley  
Yale University

Zenita A. Wickham  
University of Maryland

Jeannette Wise  
Wittenberg University

**1996**

Vanessa Corea  
Cornell University

Gilberto Garay  
Harvard University

Llezzlie L. Green  
Dartmouth College

Hae Jin Lee  
Pomona College

**1997**

Liany E. Arroyo  
Wellesley College

Antonio José Martínez  
Amherst College

Natalie Stites  
University of California, Los Angeles

Natausha A. Wilson  
Stanford University

**1998**

Jamie Allyn Anderson  
University of Chicago

Terrica LaShun Redfield  
Tougaloo College

Van Therese Tang  
Yale University

Gene K. Yoshida  
Swarthmore College

**1999**

Srivitta Kengskool  
University of Michigan

Bonita Yen Hua Leung  
Carleton College

Benjamin I. Longoria  
Stanford University

Pedro Reyes  
University of Notre Dame

**2000**

Ryan C. Green  
Emory University

Vi Doan Nguyen  
University of Virginia

Sheetal M. Parikh  
University of Chicago

LaKesha L. Threats  
University of Memphis

**2001**

Sachin M. Shivaram  
Harvard University

Rocio C. Garcia  
Mount Holyoke College

Jillian J. Harrigan  
LaSalle University

Julie Hsiang-chi Liu  
University of Virginia

**2002**

Maya E. F. Brown  
Emory University

Lauren T. Manalang  
University of California, Los Angeles

Hafeeza E. Rashed  
Spelman College

Selena R. Sanderfur  
Fisk University

**2003**

Tsedey A. Bogale  
Spelman College

Samuel G. Prieto  
Whittier College

Krystal S. Reyes  
New York University

Lindell Carl Toombs, Jr.  
Hampton University

**2004**

Sarah Ann Bass  
Amherst College

Gray I. Mateo  
University of Illinois

Helen O. Ogbara  
Harvard University

Destiny Peery  
University of Minnesota

**2005**

Cassandra B. Fields  
University of Chicago

William G. Godwin  
Georgetown University

Lakeisha Gulley  
Dillard University

Carla Laroche  
Princeton University

**2006**

Zeh-Sheena Ekono  
Harvard University

Deepa Thimmapya  
Northwestern University

Tiffanye S. Threadcraft  
Harvard University

Danielle Toalton  
Swarthmore College

**2007**

Temi Adeniji  
Princeton University

Nadia Nazim Aziz  
Clemson University

Erika P. Lopez  
University of Wisconsin

Brionni A. McGriff  
Iowa State University

**2008**

Marcus W. Allen  
American University

Francesca A. Gibson  
Spelman College

Akta S. Jantrania  
Claremont McKenna College

Anayansi Rodriguez  
Duke University

**2009**

Gabriela Jara  
Columbia University

Alana C. Kirkland  
Stanford University

Cara L. McClellan  
Yale University

Amin M. Montgomery  
University of Washington, Seattle

**2010**

Angela Esi Addae  
Fisk University

Joseph L. Bishop  
Clemson University

Stephanie M. Caro  
Stanford University

Eduardo-Antonio Navarro  
University of Iowa

More information on the Summer Research Diversity Fellowship Program may be found on ABF's website at: [http://www.americanbarfoundation.org/fellowships/call\\_for\\_summer\\_research\\_diversity\\_fellows.html](http://www.americanbarfoundation.org/fellowships/call_for_summer_research_diversity_fellows.html)

If you are interested in supporting the Summer Research Diversity Fellowship Program or other important ABF initiatives, please contact Lucinda Underwood at 312.988.6573

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