

Researching LAW

SPECIAL ISSUE

Vol 27 | No 4
February 2017

COOK COUNTY
CRIMINAL COURTS
ADMINISTRATION



Opening Doors to Inquiry:

The 2016 Summer Research Diversity Fellowship

Opening Doors to Inquiry: The 2016 Summer Research Diversity Fellowship

Every summer for the last 28 years, the American Bar Foundation (ABF) has hosted four promising young scholars from diverse backgrounds for an eight-week research internship in Chicago. The Montgomery Summer Research Diversity Fellowship (SRDF) was initiated by the ABF in 1988, under the leadership of then-Director William Felstiner, as a way to help broaden the participation of minority students in empirical legal scholarship and to encourage them to pursue careers in that area. Since then, the ABF has hosted 118 accomplished, energetic, and inquisitive undergraduates with an interest in law and society studies.

The program 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. Each student is assigned to an ABF research professor, who mentors the student and involves them in the design and implementation of their latest research project. While the students work primarily as research assistants, they also become a part of the encouraging

and intellectually stimulating environment at the ABF. They attend seminars, conferences, and special events at the ABF, and meet with other ABF faculty members who acquaint them with their diverse research projects. “The program incorporates three main elements: the academic perspective, the practice perspective, and the direct experience,” said ABF Research Professor Stephen Daniels, who directs the academic component of the program. For

the direct experience component, 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 visits provides the students with an opportunity to interact with legal professionals in real-world environments.

Admission to the program is highly selective. Only four students, out of hundreds who apply each year, are invited to the program. Since

its inception, the program has hosted 118 students (87 women, 31 men) from 63 colleges and universities across the country. About 49.2 percent identify themselves as African American, 27.1 percent Hispanic/Latino, 21.2 percent Asian, South Asian, Middle Eastern, biracial, or other, and three students identified as Native American, three students LGBTQ, and one student disabled.



Justice Mariano-Florentino Cuéllar (SRDF 1992 and an ABF board member), speaking at the Fellows State Chair Luncheon at the 2016 ABA Annual Meeting in San Francisco.

The program has several notable alumni, including Hon. Mariano-Florentino Cuéllar, California Supreme Court Justice, Danielle Holley-Walker, dean of the Howard University School of Law, and Erika George, professor at the University of Utah S.J. Quinney College Of Law.

“Meeting and interacting with students from different



Danielle Holley-Walker (SRDF 1995), dean of the Howard University School of Law, where many other SRDF alumni have attended law school, including most recently Elijah B. Porter (SRDF 2014 and currently a 1L student at Howard Law). Photo courtesy of Howard University School of Law

backgrounds and different universities was broadening. Talking to my peers about their interests and plans was affirming,” Professor George recalled for a past issue of *Researching Law*. “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.”



Erika George (SRDF 1991), professor of law at the University of Utah, has returned to the ABF for conferences, seminars, and as a regular visiting scholar. Photo courtesy of the University of Utah, S.J. Quinney College

2016 Summer Research Diversity Fellows

The summer of 2016 marked the 28th annual session of the Montgomery Summer Research Diversity Fellowship. The 2016 program was supported by generous grants from the National Science Foundation, Kenneth F. & Harle G. Montgomery Foundation, Law School Admission Council, and AT&T. The 2016 fellows, Bara Ahmad, Francesca Hidalgo-Wohlleben, Kavya Rallabhandi, and Daniella Zessoules, were chosen from over 200 applicants.



BARA AHMAD is a senior at Georgia State University (GSU) majoring in political science with a concentration in pre-law. She has a strong interest in international and business law and has interned for Global Atlanta. Bara regularly volunteers for the Refugee Learning Center where she uses her knowledge of Arabic language to tutor Syrian refugees.



FRANCESCA HIDALGO-WOHLLEBEN is a senior at Claremont McKenna College majoring in philosophy, politics, and economics (PPE). In past summers, she worked for a property development group in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia and for the Jane Boyd Community House in Cedar Rapids. At Claremont McKenna, she is a research assistant at the Rose Institute of State and Local Government, where she is involved in several projects relating to policy and prison reform.



KAVYA RALLABHANDI is a senior at American University (AU) majoring in economics and minoring in international relations. She has a strong interest in international law, economic development, and access to education for students in underprivileged communities. Kavya has interned for Abt Associates, where she worked on global health and economic development projects.



DANIELLA (DANI) ZESSOULES is a rising senior at the University of Massachusetts Amherst majoring in economics and political science. She has a particular interest in American politics, economic policy, and gender, race and health care inequality. She is a research assistant for Political Science Professor Dean E. Robinson and participates in the Five College International Relations Program, which focuses on international economic systems and foreign policy.

Sociolegal Research: Cultivating the Next Generation of Scholars

“Despite his intimidating 42 page long C.V. of brilliance, Professor Hagan was one of the best mentors I’ve ever had.”

–Bara Ahmad

“He allowed me to follow my own leads on the research,” Bara said. “Having never done research before, I did not know what to expect. I was extremely fortunate to have him guide me and teach me so much in a short eight weeks.”

Bara worked with ABF Research Professor John Hagan during her summer fellowship. She helped Professor Hagan research issues involving insurgent and terrorist attacks in Iraq from 2005 to 2011. They worked together on a mapping experiment which located specific places where insurgent and terrorist attacks took place.

“The research was fascinating, but most of all, I loved working with Professor Hagan,” Bara said. “It is no wonder everyone I spoke to since I arrived here said that I am extremely lucky to have him as my mentor.”

“She did an outstanding job of helping to narrow and distinguish definitions of insurgency and terrorism,” Professor Hagan said of Bara. “It was wonderful to have such a committed student help me in this work.”

“I gained an insight into how difficult developing a project that extensive is, and all of the work that goes into planning conferences around the research.”

–Francesca Hidalgo-Wohlleben

Francesca worked with Robert L. Nelson, ABF Director Emeritus and MacCrate Research Chair in the Legal Profession, and Pilar Margarita Hernández Escontrías, an ABF Research Social Scientist, during her summer fellowship.

Francesca assisted with the research for the ABF’s Future of Latinos Project (FLP), which Dr. Escontrías manages and Professor Nelson co-directs (with our inaugural Neukom Chair Rachel F. Moran). Francesca’s contributions began with her participation in the

project’s Midwest Roundtable during her first two days at the ABF. She then helped Dr. Escontrías research and develop a database for Latino-serving law clinics and organizations around the country.

“Having the opportunity to work with Bob was very valuable,” Francesca said. “Pilar was a wonderful mentor and I’ve stayed in contact with her since.”

“Francesca exemplifies both the superb talent that the Montgomery Fellowship attracts to the ABF and the FLP’s interest in developing a new generation of leadership,” Professor Nelson said.

“Our project fosters diversity and equity by building a pipeline of leadership for the next generation of leaders,” Dr. Escontrías added. “Francesca is one of our generation’s leaders. An exceptionally talented and conscientious rising scholar, her commitment to research that matters was energizing.”

Kavya worked with ABF Research Professor Victoria Woeste and ABF Director Ajay Mehrotra during her summer fellowship.

She assisted Mehrotra with his research on the value-added tax and Professor Woeste with her continued research on the legality

“Along with creating strong bonds with my mentors, I have learned a vast amount about legal history and the importance of empirical research on law.”

–Kavya Rallabhandi

of hate speech and the Westboro Baptist Church.

“I was able to assist with research, the analysis of rough drafts, and was even given the opportunity to draft paragraphs to include in soon-to-be published work,” Kavya said. “It was so engaging... they introduced me to new research methods and analysis techniques which I had limited exposure to in other disciplines.”

“Kavya showed incisive analytical abilities as she worked through unfamiliar materials,” Professor Woeste said. “She drew important connections and synthetic ideas to my attention and provided insightful readings of secondary works, newspaper sources, and my own essays.”

Dani worked with ABF Research Professor Elizabeth Mertz and ABF Research Social Scientist Frances Tung during her summer fellowship. She helped Professor Mertz with the third phase of her research on post-tenured law professors in the United States.

“I remember being intimidated upon entering their project room. It was full of endless books, articles, book proposals and data on critical race theory, the new legal realism, and more.” Dani said.

Throughout her fellowship, Dani was immersed in stimulating conversation about voice, context, race, sexual orientation, gender, mental illness and class, and how these factors are related to the discussion of post-tenured law professors and their experiences.

“In leaving this experience, I can say that I’ve certainly come a long way. It is because of Beth and Frances that I was able to understand the complexities and layers of work under the surface of qualitative research,” she said. “I am significantly closer to understanding the process behind comprehensive empirical research. I will never forget this experience and will always value our captivating conversations.”

Professor Mertz said Dani dove into the materials for the project with impressive enthusiasm and energy.

“It was wonderful to watch her develop new insights and hear of her growing interest in pursuing a law-related career,” she said. “Dani’s growth while at the ABF provides a wonderful example of the way these fellowships can open doors for promising young people, while enriching the life of our community.”

“I could have never anticipated the degree to which Elizabeth Mertz facilitated me as a mentor throughout my time at the ABF.”

–Dani Zessoules

Summer Research Diversity Fellowship Program Alumni 1988–2015

2015

Winta Yohannes
Reed College

Jay Ruckelshaus
Duke University
Rhodes and Truman Scholar at the University of Oxford pursuing his masters in Political Theory

Maritza Navarrete
Vanderbilt University
Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellow at The Washington Center

Meagan McKinstry
Grinnell College
Completing year of service with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps and currently applying to law schools

2014

Kaitlyn Williams
Stanford University
Associate at the Boston Consulting Group

Jose Aguayo
University of California, Los Angeles
9th Grade Physical Science Teacher at Chicago Bulls College Prep

Pedro Alfonso
St. John’s University
Conflict Resolution Professional at Wood, Smith, Henning & Berman LLP

Elijah Porter
Fort Valley State University
student at Howard University School of Law

2013

Diana Lee
Bowdoin College
student at Yale Law School

Ayesha Akbar
University of Texas at Austin
Executive Analyst at a biotech startup

Kelsey Mollura
Cornell University
Paralegal at Spiegel & McDiarmid LLP

Kimberly Quick
Wake Forest University
Policy Associate at The Century Foundation

2012

Larissa Davis
Amherst College
Policy Strategist at the Cook County Sheriff’s Department

Nikita Koraddi
University of California, Berkeley
Legislative Aide at California State Assembly

Deborah Oh
University of Southern California
Managing Director at We Tutor Hawaii

Merritt Steele
Cornell University
3L student at Cornell Law School

2011

Alvita Akiboh
Indiana University
doctoral candidate in history at Northwestern University

Arlene Rivera
Pennsylvania State University
New York Attorney

Wintre Foxworth Johnson
University of Virginia
doctoral student at the University of Pennsylvania

Chris Han
University of California, Berkeley
3L student at Harvard Law School

2010

Angela Esi Addae
Fisk University
doctoral candidate in sociology at the University of Arizona

Joseph L. Bishop
Clemson University
Attorney at Motley Rice LLP

Stephanie M. Caro
Stanford University

Eduardo-Antonio Navarro
University of Iowa
Assistant Vice President of Finance at Synchrony Financial

2009

Gabriela Bersuder (née Jara)
Columbia University
Attorney at Patterson Belknap

Alana C. Kirkland
Stanford University
Attorney at Alston & Bird LLP

Cara L. McClellan
Yale University
Judicial Law Clerk in the United States Court of Appeals (Fourth Circuit); Founder of *My Sister’s Keeper Collective*

Amin M. Montgomery
University of Washington, Seattle
Forensic Social Worker/Mitigation Specialist at King County Department of Public Defense

2008

Marcus W. Allen
American University

Francesca A. Gibson
Spelman College
student at Georgetown University Law Center

Akta Joshi (née Jantrania)
Claremont McKenna College
Attorney at Sullivan & Cromwell LLP

Anayansi Rodriguez
Duke University
Attorney at Fried Frank

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Bonnie Czarny (ABE), is licensed in AR, Ins. Lic. #404091 and CA Insurance License # 0H99426.

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2007**Temi Adeniji**

Princeton University
Director of International Strategy & Operations at Warner Music Group

Nadia Nazim Aziz

Clemson University
Government Relations Director at the Arab American Institute

Erika P. Lopez

University of Wisconsin
Attorney at Kirkland & Ellis LLP

Brionni Nwosu (née McGriff)

Iowa State University
Extended Learning Coordinator at Martha O'Bryan Center

2006**Zeh S. Ekono**

Harvard University
Attorney at Sullivan & Cromwell LLP

Deepa Thimmappya

Northwestern University
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Tiffanye S. Threadcraft

Harvard University
Attorney at Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP

Danielle Toalton

Swarthmore College
Attorney at Davis Wright Tremaine LLP

2005**Cassandra B. Fields**

University of Chicago
Attorney at Williams & Connolly LLP

William G. Godwin

Georgetown University
External Affairs Officer at Communities In Schools Chicago

Lakeisha Gulley

Dillard University

Carla Laroche

Princeton University
Criminal Justice Reform Law Fellow at Southern Poverty Law Center

2004**Sarah Ann Bass**

Amherst College
Narrative Photographer

Gray I. Mateo-Harris

University of Illinois
Attorney at Ogletree Deakins

Helen O. Ogbara

Harvard University
Attorney at Dentons

Destiny Peery

University of Minnesota
Assistant Professor of Law, Northwestern University

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Spelman College
Attorney at Reed Smith

Greg Prieto

Whittier College
Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of San Diego

Krystal S. Reyes

New York University
Director of Community Engagement at NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Lindell Carl Toombs, Jr.

Hampton University
Washington D.C. Attorney

2002**Maya E. F. Brown**

Emory University

Lauren T. Manalang

University of California, Los Angeles

Hafeeza E. Rashed

Spelman College
Senior Advisor, Communications and Outreach at the King Baudouin Foundation United States

Selena R. Sanderfur

Fisk University
Assistant Professor of History at Western Kentucky University

2001**Sachin M. Shivaram**

Harvard University
President of Samuel Pressure Vessel Group

Rocio C. Garcia

Mount Holyoke College
Attorney at Hunton & Williams

Jillian J. Harrigan

LaSalle University
Fraud SME/Analyst

Julie Hsiang-chi Liu

University of Virginia
Washington D.C. Attorney and restaurant owner

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Emory University
General Counsel, Department of Central Management Services, State of Illinois

Vi Doan Nguyen

University of Virginia
Partner at IslerDare PC

Sheetal M. Parikh

University of Chicago
Director of Compliance at PLS Financial Services

LaKesha L. Threats

University of Memphis

1999**Srivitta Kengskool**

University of Michigan
Senior Counsel, Legal Affairs, NBCUniversal

Bonita Yen Hua Leung

Carleton College
Hong Kong Attorney

Benjamin I. Longoria

Stanford University
CEO & founder of Wizdocs, Inc.

Pedro Reyes

University of Notre Dame
Of Counsel at Paul Hastings

1998**Jamie Allyn Anderson**

University of Chicago

Terrica Ganzy

Tougaloo College
Development Director at Southern Center for Human Rights

Van Therese Tang

Yale University
Applied Data Manager

Gene K. Yoshida

Swarthmore College
Senior Director, Enterprise Risk at Prosper Marketplace

1997**Liany E. Arroyo**

Wellesley College
Senior Director of Health Equity at The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy

Antonio José Martínez

Amherst College
Seattle Attorney

Natalie Stites

University of California, Los Angeles
Tribal Attorney

Natausha A. Wilson

Stanford
RIM Program Officer, Vice President at MUFJ Union Bank

1996**Vanessa Corea**

Cornell University
Academic Advisor and Adjunct Professor at Northern Virginia Community College

Gilberto Garay

Harvard University

Liezlie L. Green

Dartmouth College
Associate Professor of Law, American University

Hae Jin Lee

Pomona College

1995**Daniel J. Acosta**

Yale University
Partner and Managing Director at Boston Consulting Group

Rafael Cox-Alomar

Cornell University
Assistant Professor of Law, University of the District of Columbia

Danielle Holley-Walker

Yale University
Dean, Howard University School of Law

Zenita A. Wickham

University of Maryland
Chief Counsel for Civil Rights and Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General, Maryland

Jeannette Wise

Wittenberg University
Washington D.C. Attorney

1994**Martha P. Escobedo**

California Polytechnic University

Hosea H. Harvey

Dartmouth College
Associate Professor of Law, Temple University

Corinna Cherian

University of Southern California
Senior Vice President at City National Bank

Melanie E. Roberson

Wesleyan University
Organizational Effectiveness Consultant at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

1993**Christine Marie Garza**

Northeastern Illinois University
Business Development Consultant

Sherri Lee Keene

Spelman College
Associate Professor of Law, University of Maryland

Rhonda Joy Mundhenk

Westmont College
CEO of Lone Star Circle of Care

Trevor Howard Peterson

Northwestern University
VP of Legal and Business Affairs, NYAV Post

Tom Isaac Romero

University of Denver
Associate Professor of Law, University of Denver

1992**Mario-Florentino Cuéllar**

Harvard University
California Supreme Court Justice

Tiffany Davis Miller

Northwestern University
Senior Associate General Counsel at Northern Illinois University

Gabriella C. Gonzalez

Harvard University
Senior Sociologist at the RAND Corporation

Lori C. Thomas

Penn State University
Clinical Psychologist

1991**Pax Ahimsa Gethen**

Northwestern University
Writer and Photographer

Erika Renee George

University of Chicago
Professor of Law, University of Utah

James Gleason Hurt

Bowdoin College
Account Director at Commonground Marketing

Akilah E. Kamaria

Penn State University
Executive Director, Blue Fields Digital

1990**Otto Beatty**

Morehouse College
Managing Director at Intelligent Office of Columbus

Theresa M. Cerda

Northwestern University

Karen Kathleen Harris

Princeton University
Partner at Arnstein & Lehr LLP

Victor Andres Reinoso

Georgetown University
Senior Adviser at Bellwether Education Partners

1989**George Comer**

University of Chicago
Associate Professor, Georgetown University McDonough School of Business

Kim McCullough

Trinity College

Deborah Rosenberg

Wesleyan University
Assistant Professor of Instruction, Northwestern University

Lisa Stewart Hughes

Yale University
Vice President & Deputy Chief Compliance Officer at NBCUniversal

1988**Andrea Lynn Caver**

Northwestern University

Calita Robinson

Northwestern University
Senior Managing Counsel at The Coca-Cola Company

James Scott McKee

Northwestern University

David P. White

Grinnell College
National Executive Director and Chief Negotiator of Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artist (SAG-AFTRA)

Field Visits: Exposure to Academia, the Legal System and Legal Profession

MIDWEST ROUNDTABLE OF THE FUTURE OF LATINOS PROJECT

The fellows' first day coincided with the Midwest Roundtable for one of the ABF's newest research projects, The Future of Latinos in the United States: Law, Opportunity, and Mobility. This was the first event in a series of regional conferences across the country; the second was held at UCLA the following November. The roundtable brought together leading members of the Latino community from Chicago and the Midwest, including law and non-law scholars, legal advocates,

community activists, politicians, media representatives, foundation representatives, and emerging leaders. The fellows heard from several notable Latino leaders, including Sylvia Puente, executive director of the Latino Policy Forum, Juan Salgado, CEO and President of Instituto del Progreso Latino, and Jesus "Chuy" Garcia, Cook County Commissioner and 2015 Chicago mayoral candidate. They also participated in the small group breakout sessions that occurred over the course of the two days, discussing immigration, education, economic opportunity, and civic and political engagement.

CRAIN'S FUTURE OF CHICAGO CONFERENCE

Next, the fellows attended the Crain's "Future of Chicago" conference. During the daylong conference, panelists from across the city discussed their ideas on education, fiscal matters, criminal justice, and economic development in Chicago. There were several notable speakers, including Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Chicago Police Department Superintendent Eddie Johnson, and Kofi Xola, co-leader of the Chicago chapter of Black Lives Matter.



Francesca and Dani take notes during the keynote presentations of the roundtable, which focused on the history and demographic profile of Latinos in the Midwest, and the region's law and policy landscape. The fellows heard from keynote speakers Lilia Fernandez, associate professor at The Ohio State University, Sylvia Puente, Ricardo Meza, an attorney at Greensfelder and former Midwest regional counsel for MALDEF, and Layla Suleiman-González, director of the Program in Human Services at Loyola University Chicago.



Francesca in the first small group breakout session of the day, which focused on scenarios in which law and policy entrench inequality and block mobility, instead of promoting full inclusion and opportunity for Latinos.



The fellows with FLP Project Manager Pilar Margarita Hernández Escontrías, emerging Latino/a leaders, and Cook County Commissioner Jesus "Chuy" Garcia.

Ché "Rhymefest" Smith, an Oscar- and Grammy-award-winning hip hop artist, spoke about the need to invest in more arts- and entrepreneur- focused incubators on the south and west sides of Chicago. Rhymefest is the creative director of Donda's House, an arts nonprofit on the south side. Dan Montgomery, president of the Illinois Federation of Teachers, pressed for open and public bargaining sessions between the teachers union and government, in order to restore faith in the public school system. Harrison Steans, CEO of the Steans Family Foundation, said to urge businesses to rethink sweeping bans on hiring ex-offenders.

ABF affiliated scholar and Temple University professor Nicole Gonzalez Van Cleve was another featured panelist at the conference. Her new book, "Crook County: Racism and Injustice in America's Largest Criminal Court," draws on more than 15 years of field research

in Chicago's court system. Professor Van Cleve completed "Crook County" during her time as a visiting scholar at the ABF in 2015. During the conference's criminal justice panel, she encouraged Chicago voters to research their local judicial candidates using resources like Chicago Bar Association evaluations. She said this effort would help remove unqualified, abusive, and/or discriminatory officials who continuously appear on the ballots.

"This conference provided a platform to hear about different outlets of social change, whether it is through politics, policy, organizing or music—each speaker presented incredible insight," Dani said.

"It [the conference] addressed many of the problems plaguing Chicago from education to the criminal justice system, without steering clear of controversial issues such as police brutality and the state budget," Kavya said.

"Seeing Rahm Emanuel speak and witnessing how he is viewed by the public was a very interesting experience."

"It was crucial to witness the responses of the crowd, mayor, and superintendent," Bara added.

Mayor Emanuel's opening keynote address was interrupted by housing activists protesting his alleged lack of support for Chicago Housing Authority reforms.

After the conference, Professor Van Cleve returned to the ABF offices for an informal meeting with the fellows. She spoke about the experiences that inspired her to write "Crook County," and explained her process of researching and writing the book.

"She discussed how early the research process started—in her senior year of undergraduate—and it was inspiring to hear the process of development from an age not too far from where I am today," Dani added.



The fellows at the Crain's "Future of Chicago" Conference at the Palmer House Hilton in Chicago.



The fellows meet with ABF Affiliated Scholar Nicole Gonzalez Van Cleve at the ABF offices after the conference.

“She was also able to contextualize her research for us,” Kavya said. “And the content of the book helped us approach other field visits relating to the criminal justice system critically.” Soon after meeting Professor Van Cleve and reading “Crook County,” the fellows visited the Cook County Criminal Court.

COOK COUNTY CRIMINAL COURT

In June, the fellows visited the Cook County Criminal Court and met with Assistant State Attorney Jennifer Coleman. They “shadowed” her in criminal proceedings for several cases, including a DUI, criminal sexual assault, and the sentence confirmation of a teenage boy



The fellows in front of the busy Cook County Criminal Court in the Little Village neighborhood of Chicago.

who was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison.

Afterwards, Dani and Kavya both agreed that this was an experience they “will never forget.”

“Shadowing Jennifer as we moved about courtrooms and she briefed us on cases was an invaluable peek into the life of a state attorney and the inner workings of the Chicago court system,” Kavya said. “The whole experience helped humanize the countless individuals being held in the largest jail in America.”

“It was intriguing to see the day-by-day proceedings without any attachment to a lawyer, judge, or victim,” Bara said.

“I also learned the difference one word can make,” Dani added. In one of the last proceedings they sat in on, there was a long deliberation on whether criminal sexual assault or *aggravated* criminal sexual assault was more appropriate for the case.



The fellows meeting with Jennifer Coleman in the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office.

Francesca added that the visit—which happened as they were reading Nicole Gonzalez Van Cleve’s “Crook County”—added an important local dimension and perspective to the book.

ADMISSIONS AT NORTHWESTERN PRITZKER SCHOOL OF LAW AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO LAW SCHOOL

In June, the fellows met with admission representatives from Northwestern Pritzker School of Law and the University of Chicago Law School, to get a better understanding of the law school application process.

The fellows first met with Cristina Gapasin, director of admissions and financial aid at Northwestern Law.

Bara, who took the LSAT only a few days prior to beginning the fellowship, plans to apply to law schools soon. “Northwestern specifically is at the top of my list,” she said. “It was extremely helpful to talk to someone who could be the person admitting you into a school.”

“Before this fellowship, I was under the impression that law schools only looked at your LSAT scores and G.P.A.,” Kavya said. “I very quickly learned that this is not the case. I was glad to hear that law schools value experience and diversity; therefore, the personal statement and interview are very important for the application.”

Gapasin urged the fellows to view themselves as “buyers” in the law school market when it comes time to apply. She stressed “the importance of looking at schools as an investment,” Dani added. “—One that should be researched thoroughly and as early as possible.”

The fellows also met with Ann K. Perry, associate dean for admissions at University of Chicago Law School.

Dani said that she was in awe of the University of Chicago’s beautiful Gothic campus, especially the law school’s “huge library encircled by professors’ doorways as to encourage fellows to come in, ask questions, and interact.”

For all of the fellows, meeting with law school admission representatives from both Northwestern University and the University of Chicago proved invaluable; it showed them how different law schools can be. “This experience helped me realize how important it is to visit the schools I am interested in and meet with admissions to determine if I am the right fit for the school,” Kavya said.

Northwestern PRITZKER SCHOOL OF LAW



Karen L. Daniel, clinical professor of Law at Northwestern University and director of the Center on Wrongful Convictions. Photo courtesy of Northwestern Pritzker School of Law.

CENTER ON WRONGFUL CONVICTIONS

In partnership with outside pro bono attorneys, the faculty, staff attorneys, and law students at the Center on Wrongful Convictions (CWC) at Northwestern Law represent imprisoned clients with claims of innocence. The CWC reviews approximately 3,000 inquiries a year from inmates around the country and has pioneered projects focused on representing wrongfully convicted youth and women.

In June, the fellows met with CWC interns and Karen L. Daniel, director of the CWC and clinical professor of law at Northwestern University. Professor Daniel showed the fellows an emotional video highlighting some of the wrongfully convicted individuals they have represented. They had an engaging conversation about

the long process of representing clients, from choosing cases to (in some cases) securing their client's exoneration and/or freedom from prison.

Although she is primarily interested in business law, Bara said that this visit inspired her to possibly pursue clinical work in criminal law during law school.

"We got to see stories of people who were wrongfully convicted and their process of being found innocent. To me, it showed a different view in the criminal system—one I could be interested in," she said.

"This was one of my favorite visits. Karen was extremely insightful and provided us with an in-depth overview of the Center on Wrongful Convictions." Francesca said. "I appreciated having that time to ask questions and learn more about how the organization functions."

LAW IN THE HISTORY OF CAPITALISM CONFERENCE

Later in June, the ABF hosted the first-ever Law in the History of Capitalism Conference. The conference was the result of a recent surge in new scholarship on the historical relationship between law and capitalism. It was co-sponsored by the ABF, American Society for Legal History, University of Chicago Law School, Indiana University Maurer School of Law, University of Illinois College of Law, University of Michigan Law School, University of Minnesota

Law School, and University of Pennsylvania Law School.

The fellows attended both days of the conference, where legal historians presented their latest research. They were also able to network with junior and senior scholars in the field. To engage them with the content, ABF Director Ajay Mehrotra asked the fellows to document the feedback the doctoral fellows received on their unpublished research.

"The conference was valuable in understanding the dynamic of receiving helpful, critical and instructive feedback on your work, even if you have been working on it for many years, like many of the doctoral fellows had been," Dani explained.

"It gave us insight into the incredibly distinctive areas of study that graduate fellows from all over the country concentrate in, and how essential each scholar's voice



The fellows take notes during the morning research presentations from junior scholars.



The fellows interact with Professor Christopher Schmidt, faculty fellow at the ABF, and other legal historians at the conference dinner.



is in the overall conversation of law and the history of capitalism," she added.

"All the senior colleagues encouraged involvement and an inquisitive and critical nature—the very pillars of the ABF environment," Kavya said. "There were intriguing conversations ranging from particulars about methodology, to writing style, to the accessibility of the work being presented."

NORTHWESTERN LAW CLASS ON NEGOTIATION

In June, the fellows sat in on a negotiation class with Daniel Gandert, clinical assistant professor of law in the Center on Negotiation and Mediation at Northwestern Law.

"The class was truly an exposure to the 'law school realm' and proved fascinating and beneficial," Francesca said.

"The class focused on ethics while practicing law, which led to

a very interesting discussion on how to zealously represent your client without crossing any ethical guidelines," Kavya said.

"It was great to see what a smaller law school class looks like and look at what sort of expectations were anticipated from law students," Dani added. "The professor even included us in the conversation. It definitely helped calm some of my personal anxieties concerning the previous unknown territory of a typical law school classroom."

ITT CHICAGO-KENT COLLEGE OF LAW

In July, the fellows rounded out their local law schools visits with a tour of Chicago-Kent College of Law in downtown Chicago. They met with Daniel T. Coyne, clinical professor of law at Chicago-Kent. Prior to joining the faculty at Chicago-Kent in 2005, Professor Coyne spent over 20 years heading his own private practice, working exclusively on criminal cases. The



Photo courtesy of the Illinois Institute of Technology.

fellows also met with Chicago-Kent staff attorneys Kate Levine and Matthew Daniels (son of ABF Researcher Stephen Daniels).

"This was by far the most in-depth and versatile conversation we had in a field visit," Kayva said. "The attorneys were very open to us about clinic work, the Chicago-Kent Law School and the criminal justice system in Chicago. I really enjoyed the unique insights Dan and his colleagues had on working in the Cook County Criminal Court."

KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP

Founded in Chicago, Kirkland & Ellis LLP is one of the world's most elite international law firms. In July, the fellows visited the firm's Chicago office and met with Aisha P. Lavinier, a corporate attorney who specializes in Mergers & Acquisitions (M&A), and Martin R. Martos II, a partner in the Litigation Department. Lavinier and Martos II gave the fellows a tour of the offices, spoke with them about their careers, and

offered advice about law school and beyond.

“Both Aisha and Martin were thoughtful and provided us a space to ask any questions pertaining to their field,” Francesca said.

“They really helped to break down the ambiguity and vast nature of corporate law by describing what specific areas they work on and the differences between the two of them,” Dani added.

For Bara and Kavya, the visit was especially valuable because they hope to pursue careers in business and international law.

“I am extremely interested in practicing law in the corporate firm environment, so being able to talk to two attorneys about their journeys and how they got there was helpful—particularly when they talked about their day-to-day,” Bara said.

“The associates we met with were

very honest and receptive to our questions,” said Kavya. “This was a very rewarding experience as I was able to network with lawyers in the field I hope to be in one day.”

HONORABLE SOPHIA H. HALL, CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY

Judge Sophia H. Hall is the Administrative Presiding Judge of the Resource Section of the Juvenile Justice and Child Protection Department of the Circuit Court of Cook County. Judge Hall helps facilitate collaboration between the Juvenile Court and the community in order to better serve children and families. She is also assigned to the Chancery Division where she hears, among others, cases seeking equitable relief, corporate and partnership cases, class actions, and declaratory judgment actions.

In July, the fellows met with Judge Hall in her chambers at the Daley

Center in Chicago. For more than an hour, they spoke with Judge Hall about their career plans and learned about her experiences and journey to the bench.

“[Judge Hall] took a genuine interest in what we aimed to do after graduating and gave us advice on how to succeed in the legal field, especially as a woman,” said Kavya. “Hearing about her journey was incredibly inspirational.”

“She gave us insight into her experience as one of just four women in her graduating class at Northwestern Law, all the way up to her position as an administrative presiding judge for the Circuit Court of Cook County. She is definitely a role model,” added Dani.

In a follow-up interview, the fellows mentioned that they have kept in touch with Judge Hall since their meeting.

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION (ABA) OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The ABA Office of Diversity and Inclusion is charged with advancing Goal Three of the American Bar Association—eliminating bias and enhancing diversity in the association, the legal profession, and the justice system. The office encompasses the ABA’s Center for Racial and Ethnic Diversity, Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession, Coalition on Racial and Ethnic



The fellows meeting with Judge Sophia H. Hall in her chambers. Judge Hall is an ABF Board member.



Justice, Council for Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Education Pipeline, Commission on Hispanic Legal Rights & Responsibilities, and the Commission on Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity.

On one of their last field visits, the fellows visited the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at the ABA Headquarters in Chicago. They had lunch with several

representatives from the Office, including Pedro Juan Windsor Jr. (Managing Director), Sharon Tindall (Operations Manager), Keevin Woods (Director of the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession), Skip Harsch (Director of the Commission on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity), and Nancy C. Andrade (Lead Counsel for the Commission on Hispanic Legal

Rights & Responsibilities).

“In a profession where most of the players are white, it was interesting to see the work being done to help even the playing field for minorities,” Bara said after the meeting.

“It really stuck with me when Keevin talked about how the profession is almost 90% Caucasian, and how imperative it is to put pressure on the slow-moving system,” Dani said.

“They also informed us of various scholarship programs,” Kavya added.

The fellows showed a particular interest in the Judicial Clerkship Program, which connects diverse law students to judicial clerkship opportunities around the country.

Sharon Tindall, who manages the program, provided the fellows with a wealth of information so that they could revisit the opportunity if they decided to attend law school.



After meeting with Lavinier and Martos II for over an hour, the attorneys took the fellows on a tour of Kirkland’s upscale Chicago office. Approximately 600 attorneys practice at this location. “With all of the art displayed throughout each floor, the Kirkland office competed with some of the museums we visited in Chicago!” Dani said of the visit.



The fellows meeting with Woods, Andrade, Harsch, Tindall, and Windsor Jr. at the ABA.

Beyond the Fellowship

After visiting the Cook County Criminal Court, attending a conference on Chicago's future, hearing from Mayor Rahm Emanuel, reading "Crook County," and meeting Chuy Garcia, the fellows agreed that what they loved most about their summer was that it was a very "Chicago-themed" fellowship. Bara, who plans to attend law school in fall 2018, looks forward to returning to the city if she is accepted to her top choice, Northwestern. In recent follow-up conversations, the fellows spoke about what they've been up to, what they plan on doing after graduation, and the impact that the SRDF program had on them.

During her senior year, Bara has worked as a research assistant at Georgia State University for a project on mobilizing media and propaganda. Bara said the SRDF program solidified her desire to go to law school and pursue a career as a practitioner.

"The SRDF program definitely helped with networking with different people in the legal field, whether it was in research or in practicing law," Bara said.

After graduation, Bara hopes to work at a law firm. In the fall, she plans to apply to law schools so that she can begin her studies in the fall of 2018, concentrating in corporate law.

Francesca has continued her position as a research assistant at the Rose Institute of State and Local Government and led a new hire training program at the Institute in the fall. She is a writing consultant at the Center for Writing and Public Discourse

at Claremont McKenna College. Francesca also plans to gain real world experience by working for a few years before she attends law school. She is in the process of applying for positions in economic development consulting and at law firms in California.

"The SRDF program has had a huge impact on my plans for the future," she said. "After speaking with law professors and visiting Northwestern Law and UChicago Law, I plan to apply for law school, but will delay those plans a bit to work first."

During her senior year, Dani continued to assist Professor Dean E. Robinson with his research on black insurgency movements and racial health inequalities. She also served as a conduct advisor for UMass's Student Government Association in the fall, advocating for students charged with violations of school codes, policies, and/or state law. "It was a challenging but rewarding

experience to deal with students one-on-one, student-to-student, and to understand and interpret school and state regulations," Dani said.

"The SRDF program solidified my understanding of the importance of a degree in law," Dani said. "But it also helped me recognize the importance of taking constructive time off before continuing onto grad school."

The SRDF program, along with her research with Robinson and coursework on race, class, inequality and public policy, has inspired Dani to pursue employment in public policy and social justice. She graduated a semester early and is currently awaiting decisions back from several employment and fellowship opportunities, while volunteering at an afterschool English language learning program in her hometown.

Kavya returned to Abt Associates as a legal intern during her senior

year at American University (AU). She came back to Abt, an international development firm and one of the largest EPA and USAID contractors, because it combined her two academic passions—law and international relations. On the AU campus, she is a resident assistant as well as a teaching assistant for an economics class of over 300 students. She is currently

taking upper-level classes and finalizing her Capstone Project.

Kavya said the SRDF program has had a significant impact on her plans for the future. The experience has inspired her to pursue a JD/PhD in economics. She hopes to begin her career in corporate law before transitioning into a field in academia and

research. "The program has not only impacted my career plans," she said, "it has also provided me with a large network of resources and people who are always willing to help." After graduation, she plans to work as a paralegal for 2–3 years, ideally at a corporate law firm in Washington, D.C., before applying to law school.

Community of Researchers: Mentorship by ABF Faculty

During the course of their fellowship at the ABF, the fellows had weekly 'brown bag' lunch meetings with almost every ABF faculty member and affiliated scholar in residence. The fellows were exposed to ABF scholars from several disciplines. They met with legal scholar Erika George during her summer term as a visiting scholar at the ABF and learned about her background as a leading expert in international human rights law, racial discrimination, and gender violence. They were able to spend time with sociologist Terence Halliday after he published an op-ed in *The Guardian* on the abduction of Chinese lawyer, Li Heping, in China's recent crackdown on human rights lawyers and activists.

In their meeting with Victoria Woeste, a legal historian, the fellows explored her research on the public activities of the Westboro Baptist Church and the intersection of issues of public speech. Law professor and psychologist Shari Diamond shared her most recent work on juries; how they behave, how they deliberate, and how they achieve consensus in the court.

"Every meeting was incredibly fascinating and created an atmosphere in which we were able not just to hear about research, careers and projects, but we could also hear about the path that each faculty member went through to get to their current positions," Dani said.

"Everyone came from different backgrounds and places; it was

nice to see how they found their passion and their way to the research field," Bara added.

Researching

LAW

SPECIAL ISSUE
Vol 27 | No 4 | February 2017



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