

FELLOWSHIPS

a pathway to a public interest career

CIVIL RIGHTS

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

LOW-INCOME WORKERS

EDUCATION REFORM

INTERNET POLICY

AIDS ADVOCACY

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

TENANTS' RIGHTS

RIGHTS OF MENTALLY ILL

PRISON REFORM

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Each year, dozens of Yale Law School students and graduates apply for highly competitive fellowships in the U.S. and abroad. These experiences—from the Bronx to South Africa—offer substantive, on-the-ground training for new attorneys and those seeking to shift practice focus. Fellows work in a range of settings—including nonprofits, government agencies, and international courts—gaining valuable contacts and experience that frequently serve as the foundation for a career in public interest work.

Generally project-based, fellowships are often designed under the umbrella of a sponsoring organization. Fellowship projects frequently stretch or increase an existing organization's capacity (for example, a fellow at a domestic violence clinic might offer additional help in securing benefits for the clinic's clients—a service the clinic wouldn't otherwise be able to provide) while offering invaluable hands-on experience to graduates.

"Fellows have a real impact on the populations they serve and are meeting a need in the communities in which they work," says Akua Akyea, Public Interest Director in the Law School's Career Development Office. Often, too, the fellowships offer an entrance to organizations or positions which would otherwise be nearly impossible to access.

Often a graduate's work with an organization continues after the formal fellowship has ended. Even those who do not stay with their sponsoring organization frequently continue public interest work. For example, as of April 2012, of the seventy YLS graduates who have completed Arthur Liman Public Interest Fellowships, sixty-three (or 90 percent) are doing public service of some kind—government, nonprofit, or teaching.



Legacy of Apartheid

Matiangai Sirleaf '08

Robina Fellow
Clerk at the Constitutional Court
of South Africa

Before she arrived for her first day of classes at Yale Law School, Matiangai Sirleaf '08 had an interest in human rights law, particularly as it pertained to Africa. In 2004, following her college graduation from NYU, Sirleaf received a Fulbright Fellowship to Ghana, where she conducted research on transitional justice and earned a master's degree in international affairs.

Her interest in human rights law grew during law school, when Sirleaf served as a student director of the Lowenstein Human Rights Clinic, Managing Editor of the *Yale Journal of International Law*, and student director of the Schell Center for Human Rights.

By the time she graduated from YLS, Sirleaf was firmly committed to studying and working in the field of transitional justice. Her problem was that age-old one of how to secure a job without work experience.

"For human rights-minded law school graduates it can be difficult to get substantive experience; most of the jobs are looking for people with at least three to four years of work experience," Sirleaf explains. "NGOs and other organizations just don't have the capacity to train new employees and aren't able to invest resources in someone fresh out of Law School."

"Without the Robina or the Bernstein or some fellowship that enables you to get involved in human rights work it's really just not possible to get that experience," she says. "The opportunities in the human rights field in general are pretty limited but there is a lot of interest, so it's very competitive. The deck is stacked against you in many ways. The Robina was great because it allowed me to build that experience right out of law school."

As a student at YLS Sirleaf had become fascinated by the Constitutional Court of South Africa, and some of its groundbreaking decisions about socio and economic rights. She quickly learned that while the Court had an international law clerk program to which she could apply, the clerkships were unfunded. Her interest in the court likely would have ended there if it weren't for the Robina Fellowship she applied for and secured.

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Aids Advocacy

Eric A. Friedman '02

Bernstein Fellow

Physicians for Human Rights

Eric A. Friedman has been working on issues related to health and human rights for a decade—spending much of that time working on HIV/AIDS advocacy and issues of health care access. Now a fellow at Georgetown Law Center's O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law, Friedman is working on the Joint Action and Learning Initiative on National and Global Responsibilities for Health (www.jalihealth.org). The initiative's goal, essentially, is to develop a global health treaty that aims to reduce health inequities and is grounded in the right to health and the right's commands of equality, accountability, and participation.

"Any role I may have in this effort—and the better health, above all, of the world's poorest and most marginalized segments of society to which it might contribute—has its roots in the Bernstein Fellowship," Friedman says.

Friedman credits his Bernstein fellowship as being the foundation of his career since law school. As a 3L, in fact, Friedman came "unexpectedly close" to accepting a private sector position at a law firm as public interest opportunities fell through. Instead, he was offered a Bernstein Fellowship—and the opportunity to pursue the human rights practice that had drawn him to studying law in the first place.

Friedman spent his Bernstein Fellowship year (2002–03) in the Washington, D.C., office of Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) and its newly launched AIDS campaign. "The position provided a welcome continuity from my time in the Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic in law school," Friedman says. "There I had initiated several projects on the global AIDS crisis, including having explored possible PHR advocacy on AIDS, before it launched its campaign."

Friedman had been drawn to AIDS advocacy work by a broader concern for poverty. "It struck me (and still does) as a particularly gross and pervasive violation of people's human rights, all the more so from the vantage point of what the U.S. could—but was failing—to do to address poverty," Friedman says. "This concern led to my interest in Africa, and the debilitating impact of HIV/AIDS, with treatment largely unavailable (at the time), its rapid spread, and dire projections of its further growth."

As a Bernstein Fellow, Friedman helped PHR mobilize the trust and influence of health professionals to advocate for a

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Eric A. Friedman



Eric Friedman participates in a panel at a conference on workforce migration in Ghana in 2006.

more robust, rights-based, public health-based U.S. response to the global AIDS pandemic. He worked on action alerts, health professional sign-on letters, factsheets, policy briefings, reports, and helped develop PHR's long-term approach to AIDS-related advocacy, which would come to include legislative successes.

Following that fellowship year, he remained at PHR for nearly seven more years. Much of his work during that time was spent leading a health workforce campaign, which was focused on addressing the massive shortage and inequitable distribution of health workers in Africa and globally, and other health system deficits.

That work experience, in turn, positioned Friedman for his work at Georgetown Law Center.

"Looking back, the overriding value to me of the fellowship is that it was foundational to what is now a decade of policy and advocacy work on health and human rights, especially the human right to health," Friedman says.



Internet Policy

Anjali Dalal '10

Heyman Fellow

Assistant to the Chief

Technology Officer,

Executive Office of the President

Anjali Dalal '10 spent the year following her graduation from Yale Law School in the White House, serving as an advisor to the Chief Technology Officer in the Executive Office of the President. It's an experience, she says, that she never would have had access to had it not been for her Heyman Fellowship.

"The fellowship allowed me to meet some of the major players in the world of telecom and Internet policy," she says. "I was able to work with and learn from people who have been steeped in the field for 15 to 20 years."

Dalal's job involved working on issues of spectrum policy, cyber-security, rights-of-way, and broadband infrastructure. "Subject matter-wise, I was able to work on a ton of different things," Dalal continues. "People-wise, I was able to meet so many people in various parts of the government. I was given a seat at the table at meetings that, but for this fellowship, I would never have been invited to. Every day was a different day, with new challenges and new opportunities," she says.

After the President's 2011 State of the Union Address, for example, Dalal found herself working on a team of people planning a major speaking event for President Obama in Marquette, Michigan, home to a state-of-the-art wireless network. Rather than focusing on the importance of building roads and bridges as illustrative of the critical infrastructure that connects this

"The chance to work on high-profile issues for the White House was an incredible launching pad...it opened so many doors for me."

Anjali Dalal

country, in Marquette, Obama chose to speak about the importance of building a robust, high-speed telecommunications infrastructure to connect the country and introduced the White House's Spectrum Plan. Dalal worked with the President's Office on developing the story and crafting the speech—an experience that was not only professionally satisfying for Dalal, but also educational. "I honed my writing skills," she says, "and now I feel like I can more effectively communicate information to both policy wonks and the general public."

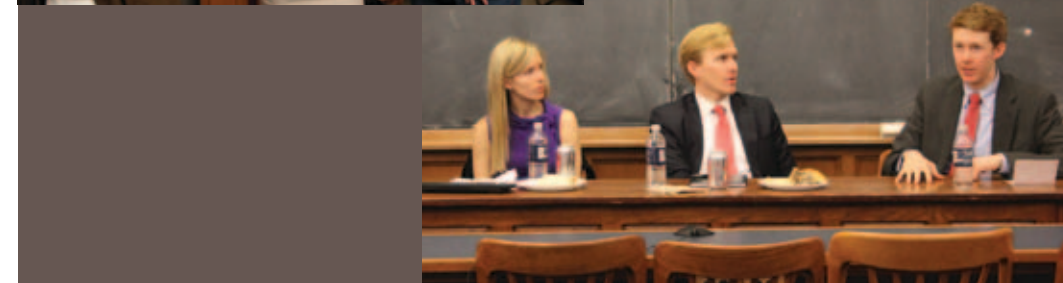
"The chance to work on high-profile issues for the White House was an incredible launching pad . . . it opened so many doors for me," Dalal continues.

Following her work as a Heyman Fellow, Dalal was named a Postdoctoral Associate in Law and Google Fellow with Yale Law School's Information Society Project. Her research and writing are focused on First Amendment issues.

In addition to valuable work experience, her fellowship, Dalal says, also provided her with a network of people with whom to consult. "Some of the people I worked with have moved on to positions in the private sector, policy shops, and academia. They continue to shape policy debate through their company's strategic decisions, their white papers, and their academic writings, respectively. Now I have this network of people who I can turn to for ideas, feedback, and support—and that's invaluable."



(Clockwise from far left) Yale Law students and fellows at the School's public interest reception in the spring; Professor James Silk and Robert Bernstein, surrounded by former and current Bernstein fellows; Heyman fellows Lindsey Luebchow '11, U.S. Department of Education; Elbridge Colby '09, Research Analyst for the Center for Naval Analyses; and Arthur Plews '11, U.S. Mission to the United Nations, at a Career Development Office luncheon in the spring.





Victims of Police Abuse

McGregor Smyth '99
Liman Fellow
The Bronx Defenders

McGregor Smyth founded the Civil Action Practice at The Bronx Defenders more than a decade ago, as a Skadden Fellow. Today, the Civil Action Practice provides comprehensive legal representation to thousands of clients on every type of legal problem, including immigration, housing, employment, public benefits, and civil rights. It is an integral part of The Bronx Defenders' award-winning holistic model, which brings together interdisciplinary work groups combining criminal defense and civil lawyers, social workers, investigators, and family court advocates to address not just the immediate criminal or family court case, but also the host of issues that drive individuals into the system. McGregor also represents two certified classes in federal court of more than 20,000 people falsely arrested by the NYPD.

In 2005, McGregor established and now directs Reentry Net, the first support network and information clearinghouse on reentry and the full range of collateral consequences of criminal proceedings. As a Liman Fellow at Bronx Defenders, McGregor developed what became Reentry Net as a resource center for criminal defense attorneys and other advocates in New York State to raise awareness about “invisible punishments” such as eviction, loss of government benefits or healthcare, and loss of employment, that come with a criminal conviction. Here, Smyth tells a story that is representative of his 13-year fight for justice for his clients in the South Bronx—the poorest congressional district in the country:

“I first met Eddie during my Liman fellowship year at The Bronx Defenders,” writes Smyth. “Eddie had been resigned to his serial arrests for pursuing his only livelihood, panhandling, but now he was angry. He wanted it to stop, once and for all. I spoke to the Bronx District Attorney’s Office, but they insisted, even in court papers, on their right to prosecute—despite a clear decision from the Second Circuit Court of Appeals that the statute in question, which criminalized ‘loitering for the purpose of begging,’ was unconstitutional. Clearly this problem went beyond Eddie. I dug further and discovered court records of hundreds of others who had been illegally arrested and prosecuted for violating this void statute. The solution had to be comprehensive. I recruited a prominent civil rights law firm, Emery Celli Brinckerhoff & Abady, as co-counsel, and together we filed a federal class action.

“We quickly uncovered an even larger problem. Three sepa-

“The Liman Fellowship supported me during a critical stage of development in my career and offers a growing network of smart and passionate public interest advocates.”

McGregor Smyth

rate courts over the last 30 years have struck down loitering laws because they violate New Yorkers’ basic constitutional rights. In 1983, the state’s highest court struck down the first statute in the context of unconstitutional targeting of consensual sex between gay men. In the next three years alone, NYPD illegally arrested more than 3,000 people under the void statute. They simply continued without pause. Police continued to arrest, DAs continued to prosecute, and courts continued to convict innocent citizens for completely legal activity. Thirty years later, the courts have struck down two more loitering statutes, and the NYPD has illegally arrested or charged more than 20,000 people. Thousands of police officers in nearly every precinct and command participated.

“It took eight years of litigation, multiple court orders, and finally a federal court holding New York City in contempt to make them stop. In this case, we finally built a structure both for meaningful relief for the victims of these police abuses and for stopping these particular practices once and for all. After 30 years of waiting, our clients will share in a \$15 million settlement, their records will be sealed, and a specific set of court-ordered procedures will ensure that NYPD and the District Attorneys’ Offices follow the law.”

Over the past twelve years, Smyth has represented hundreds of clients on cases ranging from administrative appeals of a denial of public benefits, to immigration removal proceedings, to drug eviction trials, to federal civil rights actions. He has also trained thousands of lawyers on effective advocacy strategies and consulted with other legal organizations about restructuring their services. “The Liman Fellowship and the continued support of the Liman Program formed an integral part of this work,” says Smyth. “It supported me during a critical stage of development in my career and offers a growing network of smart and passionate public interest advocates.”

“What drove Eddie’s case, like all the others, was working with the client to craft creative solutions,” continued Smyth. “This approach has led me to simple settlements according to clients’ wishes, jury trials, meetings with agency commissioners to highlight a wrong, presentations to legislators, and impact litigation. The individual clients and their experiences have driven my fight for structural change, both in the provision of services and the crafting of policy.”

HELPING STUDENTS PURSUE THE CAREER THAT THEY DESIRE

One program that has a significant effect on students’ decisions about whether to enter the public interest field is the Law School’s Career Options Assistance Program. Since 1989, COAP has made it easier for students to take the job of their choice—whether in a smaller firm, a nonprofit organization, public interest, government service, or academia. One of the first loan repayment programs of its kind, the program became a model for similar programs across the country. Today COAP remains one of the most generous loan repayment programs and continues to help students pursue the career that they desire, rather than the one that might be necessary to repay their loans.

COAP continues to be an incredibly popular program. The Law School awarded \$3,631,599 in COAP funds to 398 alumni during 2011. This was an 8% increase over the amount awarded in 2010 and a 55% increase over the amount awarded in 2008.

The effect that COAP can have can best be told by a story from one of its participants.



Kristen Jackson '02

What COAP Means to Me

MY PATH TO LAW SCHOOL was not given. I am the first lawyer in my extended family. Ranchers and farmers on my father’s side and housekeepers and trolley car operators on my mother’s side—not attorneys—preceded me. Yet my parents’ strong focus on education (they were both teachers while in their religious orders) prepared me well for law school. I chose to apply to law school while working at the Legal Aid Society in East Harlem. There, I learned that law can be a tool for social justice that I am capable of using.

When researching law schools, I paid special attention to financial aid—not only that provided during the three years of courses, but also following graduation. I had to pay for law school myself, and I knew I would go into public interest and that my salary likely would not cover my modest expenses and the large loan repayment I knew I would have. COAP, combined with the clinical program and stellar faculty, made Yale Law School my first and only choice.

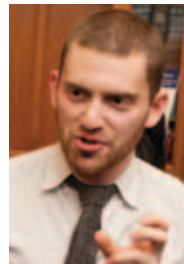
My worst day of law school was not the day of my first final, or the first time Owen Fiss called on me in Civil Procedure: It was the day, close to graduation, when we were all corralled into a room and given a PowerPoint presentation on our law school debt and when we would start to repay it. I knew I had a lot of debt, but there was something about seeing the total, in black and white, that was shocking. I eventually talked myself off the proverbial ledge that evening, reviewing all of the COAP materials and knowing that I would have help in managing and eventually coming out from under my loans.

Since then, COAP has provided me with peace of mind. I think I have been spared a lot of stress—and many grey hairs—by my knowledge that YLS has prioritized my ability to make decisions without always having to put my loan repayment concerns first. Operating without this psychic burden has allowed me the energy and clarity to engage fully in my life and work without having to have an alternate career waiting in the wings in case the debt became too weighty. I have been freed to work with my clients to face and overcome their own challenges—rather than fretting about my own loan issues, which unquestionably pale in comparison.

COAP, to be sure, is not supporting a luxurious lifestyle—I still live in 585 square feet and drive my 1997 Volkswagen—but with it I have options. I am in the process of buying my first home, made easier by my dwindling debt and my savings. And these savings, if needed, will further my public interest career. I do not doubt that even after next year—when I finish paying off my loans and no longer participate in COAP—COAP will have long-lasting effects for which I will always be grateful.

I hope that YLS will maintain and even expand upon COAP. I think that it is one of the law school’s most concrete expressions of its support for graduates’ entering and maintaining public interest careers. It goes beyond theoretical or moral support to address some of the financial barriers that prevent people from staying in public interest. It also makes YLS unique in its support for public interest work—I have never run across a loan forgiveness program as comprehensive as COAP—and surely helps to attract highly talented students who are not aiming for lucrative careers.

Kristen Jackson '02 joined Public Counsel in Los Angeles as a Liman Fellow seven years ago and is now a senior staff attorney. She represents children in juvenile dependency, delinquency, and probate court and federal administrative and court proceedings to obtain Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. Jackson also serves as a lecturer at University of California Los Angeles School of Law, where she co-teaches an asylum clinic.



New Haven's Housing Department

Ben Gross '10

YPIF Fellow

Livable City Initiative, New Haven

Ben Gross '10 didn't have to travel far for his fellowship experience, just blocks away at New Haven's City Hall, working in the Livable City Initiative, a division of the Office of Economic Development that functions as the City's housing department. Ben planned to continue developing software he had worked on as a student at the Law School's Landlord/Tenant clinic. "I ended up arriving at a transitional moment for the department," says Gross. "The new director had just set aside money to overhaul the department's operations, hoping to bring new efficiency and transparency to LCI's sprawling portfolio. Arriving when I did let me dig deep into a number of law and policy issues faced by all cities, but especially those faced by a city with an aging housing stock, an ultra-low vacancy rate, and highly diverse set of landlords, investors, and speculators."

"One of the great things about my fellowship was the breadth of projects I got to work on," he says. "I helped redesign the City's code enforcement apparatus from the ground up. I worked on software to help identify the city's worst landlords. I testified on the City's behalf before the Connecticut State Senate regarding a number of foreclosure-related bills. I helped redraft the City's residential licensing ordinance. I worked with the Law School to get clinic students to City Hall to help New Haven think about local affirmative litigation." Gross also recalled one of his favorite accomplishments: bringing back "Friday Flicks," the long-dormant, family friendly summer movie series held on the New Haven Green.

Gross noted the importance of coming to the City with outside funding from his fellowship. "It really enabled me to insin-

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Ben Gross

uate myself into the projects and subject areas that interested me most, rather than being locked into one circumscribed path. My fellowship let me observe firsthand how a city operates from a variety of angles. It also let me develop relationships with all kinds of City personnel—lawyers, policymakers, staff—people who have taught me a great deal about the secret life of cities."

Gross's interest in how cities work, fueled by his fellowship, brought him to his current position as a fellow at the Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy at NYU. "The on-the-ground experience I had in New Haven has already proved invaluable in a number of the projects I'm working on here—from research on affordable housing to the role of technology and transparency in cities to the interplay between land-use policy and urban crime. There is really no substitute for actually being in the mix at City Hall when it comes to understanding urban policy issues."

Photo by Harold Shapiro

YALE LAW SCHOOL offers a number of post-graduate fellowships for alumni interested in pursuing careers in academia or in public interest law, in the United States and abroad. These highly competitive fellowships are generally awarded for full-time work for one year at a salary of about \$44,000 per year. (Academic fellowships typically pay a little more than public service/public interest fellowships.) Fellowships provide a gateway to professional opportunities by allowing time for research and writing, or allow graduates to work in public interest positions with NGOs, international courts and tribunals, government agencies, and other organizations. This year, about three dozen students and recent graduates were recipients of public interest fellowships.

"There is a real need for more funding for fellowships that allow law students to enter public interest work," explains Public Interest Director Akua Akyea. "While our students are very successful in securing externally funded fellowships like Skadden or Equal Justice Works, there are simply not enough of those fellowships to accommodate our strong student interest. Because of their flexible nature, Yale Law School-funded fellowships provide an attractive alternative, by allowing students to craft their own projects and work on the issues that really matter to them."

apartheid continued from page 45

"A lot of the other fellowships won't fund international fellowships or clerkships—so the Robina really made clerking at the Court a possibility for me," Sirleaf says. "I am very grateful for the Robina because I was able to learn a lot by working on the court—and I think my work was able to make an impact."

As clerk to then Chief Justice Sandile Ngcobo, Sirleaf was involved with the Court's ongoing reforms to institutionalize the role of the chief justice and that of the judiciary. Sirleaf worked in the beginning phases of the project helping to conceptualize—through policy papers, research, comparative research, and task force meetings—a judiciary branch independent from South Africa's executive arm. She also worked on a number of high-profile cases, researching issues surrounding the right to water (*Mazibuko v. City of Johannesburg*) and pardon power and victims' rights (*Ryan Albutt v. Centre for the Study of Violence and Others*). In the *Albutt* case, Sirleaf had the chance to do in-depth research on a case that dealt with the legacy of apartheid and the truth and reconciliation committee.

"Alleged perpetrators had to come in front of an amnesty committee if they were accused of committing crimes during apartheid," Sirleaf explains. "They could plead that they were following the dictates of the apartheid state and ask for amnesty. They could meet with their victims or victims' family and explain their role and apologize. The issue was that there were a number of people who didn't participate in that process. And a number

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Matiangai Sirleaf

of them were in jail and they wanted to seek pardon from the president. The *Ryan Albutt* case was about how that process should play out. The question was: do victims have a right to a hearing? Do victims have any say or input if the president is considering pardoning that person? Does the victim or victim's family have a right to be heard?"

"It was very interesting because of the history of apartheid and the Truth and Reconciliation Committee," Sirleaf continues. "There was kind of a feeling that victims have a right to truth and the right to know what was happening with this process—the right to at least be heard. I was also fascinated by how this differed from the pardon process in the U.S."

Sirleaf's judge wrote the opinion stating that victims are entitled to due process rights—that they should be granted the right to be heard before a presidential pardon of a perpetrator under apartheid.

"I thought that was pretty revolutionary!" says Sirleaf. "The case had a really big impact and it was the highlight of my time working on the court to be so involved with the research that went into the decision."

Today Sirleaf is continuing to build her experience with another fellowship at the Washington, D.C., law firm Cohen Milstein where she works in the pro bono international human rights practice group. Most of the cases she helps litigate involve allegations of extrajudicial killings, torture, and trafficking in countries such as Columbia, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Iraq. "We practice in a number of districts within the U.S. I'm able to get substantive litigation experience in a number of different districts with a variety of different clients. And our cases are also in different stages—remediation, revving up for trial, the appellate level, in discovery—this is helping me learn a range of different litigation skills."

Matiangai Sirleaf also worked in South Africa as a Bernstein Fellow following her graduation from Yale Law School. As a Bernstein Fellow, Sirleaf worked with the Liberia office of the International Center for Transitional Justice, doing a comparative study of transitional justice experiences in western Africa. Y

Post-graduate Fellowships

Arthur Liman Public Interest Fellowship
 Heyman Federal Public Service Fellowship
 International Court of Justice Trainee Position
 Mary A. McCarthy Memorial Fellowships in
 Public Interest Law
 Robert L. Bernstein Fellowship in
 International Human Rights
 Robina Foundation Human Rights Fellowships
 Gruber Fellowships in Global Justice and Women's Rights
 Initiative for Public Interest Law at Yale
 YLS Public Interest Fellowships (YPIF)
 Robert M. Cover Fellowship
 San Francisco Affirmative Litigation Project Fellowship
 Howard M. Holtzmann Fellowships in
 International Dispute Resolution
 Yale Information Society Project (ISP) Resident
 and Visiting Fellowships

For more information about fellowship opportunities available to Yale Law School graduates, visit www.law.yale.edu/fellowships.



Fellows past, present, and future gather at the Public Interest Reception sponsored by the Career Development Office this spring.