



**Maida Public Interest Fellowships Program**  
**2016 Report**



# Maida Public Interest Fellowships Program 2016 Report

Dear James and Sharon,

We are pleased to present this report on the 2016 program year of the Maida Public Interest Fellowships Program. Thanks to your generosity, 41 Maida Public Interest Summer Fellows were funded at 35 public interest and government organizations in 2016, providing 15,800 hours of legal work, mostly benefiting people living in poverty in the State of New Jersey. Placements ranged from Philadelphia District Attorney's Office to Center for Constitutional Rights.

In addition, during 2015-2016, Joshua Bauers, the inaugural Maida Public Interest Post-Graduate Fellow, served for a year at Fair Share Housing Corp. in Cherry Hill, and worked statewide on enforcing New Jersey's fair housing rulings, designed to ensure that each municipality provides its "fair share" of housing for middle and low-income New Jersey residents in initial zoning and in redevelopment plans. Perhaps the best sign of the impact of the fellowship on both Josh and the organization is that Fair Share kept Josh on as a paid full-time employee after the completion of his term.

Your gift is already having a major impact on the law school, its students, the nonprofits we help to staff, and the many vulnerable people whose legal needs are better met as a result of your vision.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Cahill".

Michael Cahill  
Co-Dean

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jill Friedman".

Jill Friedman  
Associate Dean for Pro Bono  
and Public Interest

# **2016 Maida Summer Fellowships**

### 2016 Maida Summer Fellowships

Jamil	Abdus-Sami	Newark	Kings County District Attorney
Tsahai	Byers	Camden	Child and Family Advocacy Clinic
Tareef	Chamaa	Newark	ACLU-NJ
Jacqueline	Corsentino	Camden	NJ Attorney General Office
Anna	Del Buono	Camden	Somerset County Prosecutor's Office
Amanda	Deptula	Camden	Innocence Project
Tyler	Dougherty	Camden	Volunteers for the Indigent Program (VIP)
Daniel	Dowdy	Camden	Institutional Law Project
Jocelyn	Fietkiewicz	Camden	Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office
Robert	Galvan	Newark	Legal Aid Society - Criminal Appeals
Gigg	Goodlow	Newark	Federal Public Defender - TX
Adam	Herpolsheimer	Newark	Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund
Eric Macias	Intriago	Camden	Community Legal Services
Jeanne	Kabulis	Camden	Immigrant Justice Clinic
Corey	LaBrutto	Camden	NJ Attorney General - Criminal Justice
Ryan	Laddey	Newark	Eastern Environmental Law Center
Rachel	Lamb	Camden	Camden County Prosecutor's Office
Michael	Lario	Camden	Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office
Jessy	Leifer	Newark	The International Legal Foundation
Erika	Lezama	Camden	Civil Practice Clinic
Brian	McGrath	Newark	Advocates for Children
Milenda	Merrill	Camden	Consumer Bankruptcy Assistance Project
Marian	Miawad	Newark	American Friends Service Committee
Anastasia	Millicker	Camden	New Jersey Institute for Social Justice
Fara	Momen	Newark	Kids in Need of Defense
Gemini	Nazareno	Camden	Philadelphia District Attorney's Office
Zachary	Ostrow	Camden	Child and Family Advocacy Clinic
Maria Jose	Padilla	Newark	Office of Pro Se Litigation
Agustin	Paneque	Newark	American Friends Service Committee
Danielle	Panizzi	Newark	Volunteer Lawyers for Justice
Nick	Pradaxay	Newark	Civil Practice Clinic
Farah	Rahaman	Newark	Essex County Public Defender's Office - Juvenile
Angela-Patricia	Ramos	Camden	NJ Attorney General - Tort Litigation - Workers' Compensation
John	Rinaldi	Newark	Essex-Newark Legal Services
Taylor	Ruggieri	Camden	NJ Attorney General - State Police and Corrections
Khushbu	Solanki	Camden	AIDS Law Project
Peter	Szanfranski	Newark	Legal Aid Society
Alaina	Thomas	Newark	Center for Constitutional Rights
Amelia	Vangellow	Newark	Community Legal Services
Erin	Yerke	Camden	Federal Public Defender - NJ
Alexandra	Zeiger	Camden	Pennsylvania Innocence Project

**Tareef Chamaa**

J.D. Candidate, 2017

Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Wayne, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: Rutgers University, School of Arts & Sciences



**American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey**

This summer I had the opportunity and privilege to work at the American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey as a Maida Fellow. I would like to thank James and Sharon Maida for their generous contribution and commitment to advancing the public interest. Without the Maida Public Interest Fund, I would not have had the opportunity to work at *the* public interest advocacy organization – the ACLU. I gained unbridled experience from some of the most knowledgeable and talented public interest attorneys in New Jersey.

As a Maida Fellow, I was asked to draft memoranda on various legal issues currently at the forefront of civil rights advocacy. I gained expertise in issues ranging from free speech to involuntary DNA testing – expertise that was relied upon by senior attorneys at the ACLU. My role as a legal intern was atypical – I was not thrown into a corner and forgotten about, rather I played a significant role in helping the ACLU develop its agenda by identify cases and issues that were worth litigating, and determining how meritorious a potential case was.

The conversations that took place with the ACLU staff and other legal interns were also invaluable. Engaging in discussions about current events and hearing others' perspective on different legal issues allowed me to grow as a public interest advocate and as a person. As a lawyer, we have an inherent desire to believe we are “right,” or at least claim we are right, even when we are wrong. One’s effectiveness as a lawyer seems to rely on this concept, however I found that I was able to gain much more from listening and internalizing the spectrum of perspectives that were shared by my colorful co-workers at the ACLU. Again, all of this was only possible because of James and Sharon Maida’s funding and I am deeply grateful.

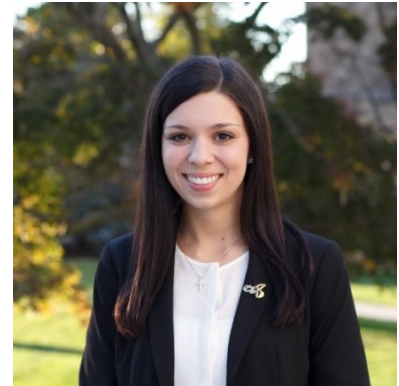
**Anna Del Buono**

J.D. Candidate, 2017

Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Ringoes, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: Rutgers University, School of Arts & Sciences



**Somerset County Prosecutor's Office**

My experience at the Somerset County Prosecutor's Office this past summer allowed me to gain valuable knowledge regarding New Jersey criminal law and the career of an assistant prosecutor in New Jersey. In the three months of my internship, I was tasked with multiple responsibilities, including drafting trial and appellate briefs that pertained to post-conviction relief, pre-trial intervention appeals, excessive sentencing, and a motion to suppress. In addition to completing extensive legal research and writing, I had the opportunity to represent the State of New Jersey pursuant to NJ Court Rule 1:21-3(b) by standing in court, arguing bail motions and a motion to suppress.

In addition to enhancing my legal writing, research, and oral argument skills this summer, working at the Prosecutor's Office provided me a great opportunity to expand my professional network with other law students, assistant prosecutors, detectives, court staff, and criminal judges sitting in Somerset County. Networking and connecting with assistant prosecutors in particular helped to establish my credibility and reliability throughout the office. This gave me the opportunity to be trusted with challenging and substantive cases from the attorneys, which led to a very interactive and hands-on experience.

Not only did working at the Prosecutor's Office help my legal skillset and professional networking within the office, but it also gave me a great advantage in my clerkship application success. Because of my criminal law experience, I had the pleasure of interviewing with several criminal judges, including those in Somerset County. I accepted a position with Judge Bradford Bury in the Criminal Division in Somerset County, and I believe a significant part of this was due to my criminal experience from my internship. Receiving the Maida Fellowship and becoming a fellow has been a true honor and permitted me to grow my passion for criminal law.

**Amanda Deptula**  
J.D. Candidate, 2017  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Egg Harbor, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: The College of New Jersey



### **Innocence Project**

This summer I was fortunate enough to be selected as a Maida fellow and work at the Pennsylvania Innocence Project in Philadelphia. The Pennsylvania Innocence Project is a legal non-profit with a two-fold mission: 1) Help exonerate the wrongfully convicted, and 2) Spread education and awareness about the flaws of the legal system with the goal of preventing future wrongful convictions. While at the Project I was able to work on a number of different cases of wrongful conviction and help work towards exoneration in numerous ways. The primary role of the summer interns was to draft investigative reports that detailed every aspect of a case from every angle and then suggest the different avenues of investigation the Project could take in working to ultimately exonerate the individual. These reports were lengthy, detailed, and very time consuming, but they were interesting and unique in that we were able to look at every single available piece of documentation and evidence in a case and essentially relive it from the time of the crime all the way through trial and any post-conviction proceedings. Although these reports were internal documents only, they were valuable in that writing them and brainstorming investigative avenues forced me to “think like a lawyer.”

I was also fortunate enough to be one of the few interns of the summer class that was able to work on more traditional legal documents, including two DNA testing motions from cases from the 1980’s. Additionally, I was also able to work on a parole package for one of our juvenile-lifers who was being released on parole under *Miller*. In doing so, I met with various different attorneys from large law firms who were working with us pro bono on our cases, so I was able to form relationships with attorneys not just within the Project, but in and around Philadelphia and some of the big law firms here.

One of the best parts of my time at the Innocence Project was being able to visit one of the state prisons and actually meet with a client I was directly working with. It is indescribable the feeling of being able to put a face and a personality to these often decade old cases we are working on. My time at the Innocence Project was exciting, rewarding, and invaluable, and I am fortunate enough to be able to stay with the Project pro bono and continue working on cases throughout my 3L year. I am very grateful for the generosity of Sharon and James Maida as their donation to Rutgers is what made this opportunity possible for me.

**Tyler Dougherty**  
J.D. Candidate, 2019  
Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Ocean City, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: Johns Hopkins University



### **Volunteers for the Indigent Program (VIP) – Philadelphia**

I spent the past summer volunteering at Philadelphia Volunteers for the Indigent Program (VIP). VIP works in collaboration with free civil legal services providers around Philadelphia and finds volunteer attorneys for the cases other nonprofit legal services groups cannot handle. I love the organization because it often helps individuals when every other organization has told them no. I am so grateful I had the opportunity to conduct client interviews, fact find about legal issues, communicate in Spanish, determine potential argument for our clients, and support the volunteer attorneys I recruited for clients' cases. I matched over 20 clients with volunteer attorneys by the end of the summer!

During the internship, I worked on everything from divorce proceedings to tax problems to probating estates. I expanded my knowledge of substantive law and saw my work make tangible differences in people's lives. For example, I helped one client file a pro se answer to a suit and eventually have a judge remove the client from the suit, thus avoiding a potentially catastrophic monetary judgment against her.

I spent significant time in landlord-tenant court, family court and mortgage foreclosure court. I made connections with judges, public-interest lawyers and private practice lawyers. I also supported volunteer attorneys at clinics aimed at helping small businesses and nonprofits receive legal help with transactional issues.

Thanks to the Maida fellowship I feel like I was able to set up the first steps for a (hopefully) long career in the Philadelphia public interest law community. I made great connections and am even going back this September to help the organization with a CLE they're hosting. Even further, the fellowship helped me narrow my field of interest to housing and landlord-tenant law. I cannot wait to continue with this line of work in the future!



**Daniel Dowdy**  
J.D. Candidate, 2017  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Brookfield, WI  
Undergraduate Institution: University of Wisconsin



### **Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project**

Over the summer of 2016, I interned for the Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project, which deals primarily with violations of prisoners' civil rights during incarceration. Thanks to Maida generously funding my internship, I was able to delve into federal civil procedure head on, bringing to life a world I had only seen on paper.

I was able to not only draft legal documents, but actually correspond with inmates. While working on a class action case, I was given the humbling task of reading letters from a great number of inmates who had been denied proper medical care, as PILP's correspondence is done initially by letter. I would then log all pertinent information into a spreadsheet and draft response letters. This was the truly humanizing part of the experience for me. To see the real problems of society's downtrodden and know that, however miniscule in the grand scheme of things, I was doing something about it. To actually communicate with these people and convey both sympathy and solidarity, while myself and my supervising attorneys zealously pursued injunctive relief.

I was also exposed to the tight-knit Philadelphia public interest community. Meeting and attending panels from people who have been involved in public interest work for years allowed me to see that it is truly a feasible career path. Without the generous funding I received to assist me in my summer internship, I may not have been able to experience all of this. I may not have been exposed to the humanity that lies behind the walls of our nation's prisons. I may not have met so many others looking to make a difference with their legal careers, one life at a time. Without funding I may not have been able to make a difference for others or see a difference in myself this summer. For that I am truly grateful.

**Jocelyn Fietkiewicz**  
J.D. Candidate, 2017  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Margate, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: Rutgers University

### **Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office**



This past summer, I was a certified legal intern at the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office. During my internship, I was assigned to a trial team and worked closely with a handful of Assistant Prosecutors and assisted with various tasks. For instance, I reviewed evidence and helped decide what charges to bring in an indictment. Additionally, I conducted legal research regarding trials and ambiguous law. I had the pleasure of having meetings with different Chief Assistant Prosecutor's every week, where they would discuss their different units they oversee and their careers while answering questions.

I observed various criminal proceedings including grand jury, motions, sentencing, trials, status conferences, and other daily court proceedings. More importantly, I had numerous opportunities to actively participate in these proceedings by standing in court under the supervision of assistant prosecutors. For example, I researched, wrote, and filed my own brief in opposition to a motion to dismiss an indictment in which I successfully argued before the court. In addition to arguing a motion, I participated in sentencing procedures and argued bail motions.

Throughout the summer, I participated in two mock trials involving real cases that will be tried in the near future. While preparing for the mock trials, I worked closely with prosecutors, detectives, and fellow student interns regarding the case, preparation, and strategy. Leading up to the mock trials, I conducted witness preparation and filed and argued pre-trial motions.

Overall, my internship at the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office was a great experience. I was able to work closely with prosecutors, detectives, and other student interns. The entire staff was very approachable, helpful, and frequently discussed issues, cases, and court proceedings with me. I admired how each prosecutor passionately advocated for the victims of the crimes in their cases. My experience this summer has reinforced my desire to pursue a career in the public interest practice area of criminal law.

**Robert Galvan**

J.D. Candidate, 2017

Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Westwood, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: Montclair State University



**Legal Aid Society - Criminal Appeals**

This past summer I interned at the Legal Aid Society’s Criminal Appeals Bureau. It was my 2L summer internship, so I was looking forward to a challenge, and to utilizing the skills I’d been learning throughout my time at Rutgers. My internship was unpaid, but the funding I received through the Maida fund allowed me to continue living on my own while working for underserved individuals in the New York court system.

The Legal Aid Society is a private, not-for-profit legal services organization, the oldest and largest in the nation. It began in 1876, and has continued to provide quality legal representation to low-income New Yorkers ever since. They serve as the foremost public defender for all five New York boroughs. Basically, if you’re arrested (mostly) anywhere in the state of New York, and you can’t afford an attorney, The Legal Aid Society is there for you.

The Legal Aid Society does not just perform public defender duties, however. They have many different divisions and bureaus, including (but not limited to) the Criminal Appeals Bureau, the Parole Revocation Defense Unit, and the DNA Project. I worked specifically with the Criminal Appeals Bureau. We were in charge of handling any indigent appellant’s case throughout New York.

At the CAB, my primary responsibilities were brief and memo writing. I wrote many appellate briefs to be filed with AD2 in New York. It was a truly rewarding experience that gave me real-life, applicable skills to be used in my eventual career. I learned the intricacies of the appellate court system, and witnessed various trial presentation skills. In addition, Legal Aid Society hosts multitudinous Continuing Legal Education seminars, allowing myself and my colleagues to further our knowledge about progressive topics in the modern law.

Overall, my experience at the Legal Aid Society was extraordinarily rewarding. I was given the opportunity to grow as a budding legal professional, and I truly appreciate the Maida Foundation having presented me with that opportunity.

**Gigg William Goodlow**  
J.D. Candidate, 2017  
Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Detroit, MI  
Undergraduate Institution: University of Michigan - Ann Arbor



### **Federal Public Defender – Dallas, TX**

Most recently, I interned for the Federal Public Defender in Dallas, Texas, which is my most rigorous and awarding experience thus far. My experience was split between appellate and trial work. For the appellate side, I immersed myself within an array of case law regarding the Supreme Court decision, *US v. Johnson*, which declared that the residual clause within the Armed Career Criminal Act is unconstitutionally vague. After writing case summaries and researching additional case law and regarding their appeals under *Johnson*, I determined if a client were eligible for appeal contingent upon the nature of the offense pursuant to 18 USC § 2255. On the trial side, I gathered research on clients' history, facilitated client interviews, wrote sentencing memorandum and collaborated with attorneys to determine the best arguments to make to reduce their sentences under the Federal Guidelines pursuant to 18 USC § 3553 factors.

This was the most eye-opening experience that I have had to date. During one training exercise, the attorneys taught us how to calculate the sentences based on the nature of the offenses committed by the defendants. As the number of months grew more and more, I experience feelings of sadness and nausea. I could not believe how many years someone could get based on the notion of “ghost dope”—which are drugs that are tenuously connected to the defendant and rooted in speculation.

During a sentencing memo, the judge believed she granted clemency to a defendant by “only giving him 15 years” at the age of 25, even though he was convicted of being a mule, which is drug lingo for moving drugs from one point to another (even if you don't know what's in the vehicle).

Immigration was something that I never had any experiences with. My ancestors were slaves, so my family never had to undergo the current process. As such, I never knew the harsh raiding tactics employed by ICE, and the harsh reality of being permanently removed from your family and being deported back to a country with which you have no or barely any familiarity. As we interviewed clients, who were begging the judge to prevent their son from being deported (to no avail), my heart broke.

Judge McBryde is someone that I have never seen or heard of until I came to Texas. Judge McBryde's tenure as a judge has been so tainted that he was sanctioned for a year from hearing any case from the federal public defender because of his abuse and mistreatment of the attorneys from that office.



**Adam Herpolsheimer**  
J.D. Candidate, 2018  
Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Wichita, KS  
Undergraduate Institution: University of Kansas

### **Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund – New York City**

Everyone involved with Maida in any way possible,

Thank you so much for making my summer possible. I interned at the Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund in New York City. It was everything I hoped for and so much more. From the very first day I dove head first into public interest lawyering: learning about transgender consciousness and how to advocate for the rights and equality of such a marginalized group. I thought I was fairly up to date on the struggle, but I learned so much more about gender and sexuality than I expected.

TLDEF focuses on impact litigation from across the country, and early on I could see how much their work benefits others. A good portion of my time was focused on healthcare law, and keeping companies/organizations from categorically excluding transgender related surgeries. Given recent additions to the Affordable Care Act there was plenty of substance to work with in the battle to keep access to affordable healthcare a human right.

A big portion of TLDEF's work is centered on their Name Change Project, where they help transgender individuals across the country through the process of legal name changes. TLDEF matches each individual with a corporate attorney that will represent them as they petition the courts for a name that will finally match their identity. During this process my job was logistical, as I completed the initial intake: an important first step in their journey. These in person intakes allowed me experience in dealing with clients face to face. It is beyond rewarding to see the smiles on their faces as they are one step closer to having their identity recognized legally.

Since TLDEF helps people from all over the country I also did intakes over the phone giving clients a safe ear to record their story, passing it along to the staff attorney so legal decisions could be made. The intakes, as well as the prisoner response letters, could often be emotionally taxing as transgender individuals experience horrors no one should ever face, but leaving them reassured that there are people eager to help made it all worth it.

Of course I learned legal skills along the way –my writing improved and I learned how to manage heavy loads of research. I made lasting connections with people dedicated to the same goals of justice and equality that I have, connections that will follow me throughout my career. My biggest takeaway would have to be from my last assignment; it was a family law case where a divorced couple were in disagreement of the gender identity of their child. The court ordered our client not to acknowledge anything about the child's internal identity, but for her to exist

only how she was assigned at birth. It was very tough. Reading through the court documents, and seeing how the judge was handling gender non-conformity left little room for optimism. I stayed later and later each evening (past the time I was supposed to) researching and reading and finding ways to help this child legally. I cannot think of many things I have ever invested so much.

I was all set for my work to be read, and the possibility of the case progressing further and further. The implications of the case were immense, and could affect families across the country. In terms of the appellate process and precedence I wanted it to affect as many people as possible. But as I was finishing up my memorandum new events occurred and changed everything. The obstinate parent was finally swayed as to her child's identity (given a new therapist's insistence) and it looked like no more legal action was to be necessary. I could say it was bittersweet, as the want for impactful precedent is always there, keeping situations like this from harming other families, but knowing the child can finally live her authentic self is sweeter than any possible bitterness.

All in all, this internship cemented in me my passion and dedication to equality. I may have come to law school a bit unsure of my place, but after this summer and my work at TLDEF, I know I want to fight for progress for many years to come.

Thank you again for making this possible.

**Eric Macias Intriago**  
J.D. Candidate, 2018  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Camden, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: Rowan University



### **Community Legal Services**

I interned this summer at Community Legal Services in their Energy Unit. I worked under the supervision of two experienced attorneys who guided me when I needed help throughout my entire internship. I handled over 30 low-income clients and helped them resolve utility disputes with PECO, PGW or Philadelphia Water Department. Often, the best solution for many of our clients was to enroll into low-income payment programs to maintain service. Much of my work involved interviewing and advising clients on how to best resolve these utility disputes. I also developed my legal writing skills through research assignments. For these assignments, I worked closely with my supervising attorneys in researching and drafting to produce a substantive legal memorandum.

Further, I met and worked with other attorneys and interns. Working in collaboration was a rewarding experience because by working together our clients received better legal service. Also, I met other attorneys and interns from outside legal organizations because, often, I had to refer clients to these outside public interest groups when their needs exceeded our services.

More, we went on a bus tour of Philadelphia and visited the neighborhoods where most of clients live. The summer was filled with many events for the interns such as seminars, meetings, and happy hours. These were great networking events and gave us an opportunity to talk to public interest attorneys outside the CLS setting. Also, there were many professional development events focusing on resume writing, job seeking strategies and interviewing tips.

My summer at Community Legal Services was a great experience. I learned a lot from CLS and it was difficult to leave. This internship helped me develop my client interview, investigation and counseling skills. I also improved my legal research and writing skills. I am very grateful to have been awarded the Maida Public Interest Fellowship because it allowed me to pursue this internship without worrying about funding.

**Jeanne M. Kabulis, Ph.D.**  
J.D. Candidate, 2017  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Wynnewood, PA  
Undergraduate Institution: University of Rhode Island

### **Immigrant Justice Clinic**

This past summer I worked in the Immigrant Justice Clinic at Rutgers Law School in Camden. The internship gave me the opportunity to learn about the complex area of immigration law, particularly the intersection between federal, state, and, in one case, international law. It allowed me to engage in the practice of law by reaching out to clients, drafting cover letters, briefs, memoranda, and affidavits. I took an active role in assembling application packages for clients seeking T and U visa nonimmigrant status as well as asylum.



It was an eye-opening summer. The learning curve was steep, but I was fortunate to work with Professor Gottesman, who is an excellent mentor. She patiently guided me through the paces and, in so doing, taught me to reflect on my work with clients. She encouraged me to put myself in the shoes of our vulnerable clients in order to conduct effective interviews and elicit necessary information and documentation. With her help interpreting substantive immigration law, I had a crash course in the different forms of relief that may be available to any given client.

I was initially drawn to the internship because I thought it would dovetail nicely with my foreign language background. Indeed, I was able to make frequent use of my French and Spanish, both in contacting clients over the phone and in written correspondence. However, the internship was also instrumental for me in helping to determine the kind of law I would like to practice. In addition to anti-discrimination law, I would now consider a career in immigration law on either side of the fence, i.e., as an attorney working for a non-profit helping undocumented individuals or, conversely, as an attorney with the Department of Justice or U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

It was my privilege to work as a Maida Public Interest fellow. If they are unable to find meaning in the work they do, it is easy to understand how many attorneys can become disillusioned with the work they do. Though emotionally fraught, public interest law provides a potential antidote to this kind of professional frustration as well as a much-needed resource in the community.



**Corey LaBrutto**

J.D. Candidate, 2017

Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Toms River, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: Stockton University

**NJ Attorney General - Criminal Justice**

During the summer of 2016, I was a Special Intern with the Criminal Justice Division of the Attorney General's Office, in the Appellate Division. My primary responsibilities in this position were to research, write briefs, and edit the work for submission to the Appellate Division. The cases I worked on were most frequently questions of Fourth Amendment violations, or violations under the New Jersey Constitution Article 1, Paragraph 7. This allowed me to become extremely familiar with the standards in New Jersey for search warrants, arrest warrants, terry stops, searches incident to arrest, and warrantless searches based on probable cause. As someone who wants to go into prosecution, this experience was extremely valuable to me and incredibly useful going forward in my career.



Aside from brief writing, I was also tasked with writing memos to try to alleviate the stress on the various County Prosecutors' Offices in implementing the new Bail Reform measures in January of 2017. With the implementation of the new bail structure, a lot of questions have arisen about how to handle a variety of issues. The Appellate Division was assigned to write a number of memos concerning the implementation of the new bail reform measures, to try to ensure that it is being handled uniformly across the state. Working on such up and coming legal issues, with absolutely no precedent in New Jersey, was incredibly exciting.

The stipend that I was given from the Maida Fellowship program allowed me to make the hour-long commute to and from Trenton every day in order to gain this experience which will ultimately be invaluable to my long-term career goals, and for that I am extremely thankful.

**Ryan Laddey**

J.D. Candidate, 2019

Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Sparta, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: Union College - New York



**Eastern Environmental Law Center–Newark**

This past summer I was a Legal Intern for the Eastern Environmental Law Center (EELC), a nonprofit, public interest organization located in Newark, NJ. EELC advocates on behalf of organizations and community groups to resolve environmental problems that threaten people, natural resources, and communities throughout New Jersey and the surrounding region. EELC represents national, state, and local citizen groups that generally cannot otherwise afford such assistance.

In this role, I conducted case law research for the representation of various environmental groups in litigation in New Jersey, including the Sierra Club and the New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance, related to reducing industrial air pollution in low-income communities, preserving vital wetlands, and protecting Green Acres land. For example, I also completed letter brief which led to the reinstatement of an appeal challenging the approval of an air permit modification for an energy center in Newark. I also drafted a statutory memo on the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection’s compliance with its public notice and comment period requirements as work product. Additionally, I conducted research on bankruptcy loopholes used to reduce environmental liabilities and drafted an op-ed piece on the issue.

**Rachel M. Lamb**

J.D. Candidate, 2017

Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Haddonfield, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: State University of New York –  
Buffalo**Camden County Prosecutor's Office**

This summer, I worked at the Office of the Camden County Prosecutor in Camden, NJ, just a short walk from campus at Rutgers School of Law. My day-to-day experience changed every day, but I was mainly centered in the Domestic Violence unit. I wrote motions to suppress evidence, argued bail reduction motions in court, and watched some of the most incredible litigants I have ever seen. The most lasting impression, however, was learning the difference between what we are taught in school or hear on the news, and how the justice system works in real life.

The attorneys I worked with this summer are passionate about their work, and worked hard to make sure that justice was served, but they also care about family members, victims, and the community that they have sworn to protect. It is viewed in some circles, through the media or personal experience, that attorneys working for a prosecutor's office or district attorney's office are cold-hearted or even indifferent toward those unlucky enough to be a defendant against the state.

This is false.

I know this, because I would walk past prosecutors comforting and counseling defendants' family members in the waiting room of the prosecutor's office long after the work day was supposed to be over. I know this, because I heard the compassion when I would overhear victim advocates talking scared and timid victims through a document or court procedure, or when I would see them holding victims' hands in the courtroom. I know, this because I witnessed the Section Chief of the homicide unit – a prosecutor who has tried literally hundreds of the county's most gruesome and upsetting cases – wipe away her own tears and try to hide the tremble in her voice during an arraignment as she described the way a defendant brutally abused and murdered an infant.

I've learned from this internship that a prosecutor's job is not to put people in jail – a prosecutor's job is to fight for justice and to better serve the community through helping people in a time of need. A prosecutor's job is not to lock people away from their families – a prosecutor's job is to serve punishment that is fair to the defendant and to the surrounding community. A prosecutor's job is not to tear apart the community – a prosecutor's job is to help piece it back together.

I feel incredibly fortunate that I was able to see the justice system at work, and I profusely thank James and Sharon Maida for giving me the opportunity to work in an office that I hope will help me launch my post-grad career.

**Michael J. Lario Jr.**  
J.D. Candidate, 2017  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Haddonfield, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: Xavier University

### **Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office**

Throughout my summer internship with the Atlantic County Prosecutor, I was fortunate enough to take part in a variety of legal situations. While the field of criminal prosecution may at first seem extremely removed from the concept of social justice, I was pleased to witness firsthand the social awareness exhibited by both prosecutors and judges in the Atlantic County criminal justice system. Specifically, I became involved in Drug Court under the supervision of Judge Mark Sandson. Judge Sandson's philosophy on drug offenses immediately drew my attention to the program. Judge Sandson would say that the majority of these people are suffering from the disease of addiction and in desperate need of treatment, not punishment. It was often said that New Jersey does not have a crime problem, it has a drug problem. This approach was refreshing in a system that all too often can seem fixated on arrest and conviction rates. I was completely ignorant to Drug Court before I started at the Prosecutor's Office and had no idea the service that it offered to drug offenders.

Drug Court is currently mandatory for drug offenses in Atlantic County and offers those who successfully complete the program not only access to local drug treatment facilities, but also expungement of their criminal record. Drug Court was by no means an easy program to complete, with requirements including in-patient treatment, counseling, and drug and alcohol screening. It was always disheartening the number of people who failed to complete Drug Court successfully and were then forced to adjudicate their legal issue in regular criminal court. Yet for those who were able to successfully complete Drug Court were not only provided the resources necessary to get control of their disease, but a clean record for going out and obtaining stable employment. It was clear the social justice component of Drug Court, as it attempted to address the issue of crime through a focus on the drug problem found in Atlantic County. The program was extremely humanizing, and the participants were talked to like people suffering from a disease, not hardened criminals. Often families of the participants would come to the court hearings and you could see the hope and encouragement on their faces. As much as I enjoyed all my work this summer, the time and energy spent working with Drug Court proved especially meaningful to both me and hopefully to the greater Atlantic County community and for that I am extremely grateful for the Maida Fellowship and the opportunities it allowed.





**Brian McGrath**

J.D. Candidate, 2018

Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Newton, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: The College of New Jersey

**Advocates for Children of New York**

This summer, I had the opportunity to work as a legal intern at Advocates for Children of New York (AFC). As part of my work there, I had the opportunity to fully immerse myself in the educational advocacy and litigation work that their staff attorneys do on a daily basis. As an intern, I learned how the litigation process plays out in an educational advocacy setting. For example, I had the opportunity to conduct client intake interviews in Spanish in order to understand my clients' needs and past educational history and struggles. All of my clients were low-income families, many of them immigrants, who felt that their children were not getting the education they deserved. It was heart wrenching to see clients whose educational needs were not being met and the difficulties they were having in obtaining a high quality education. My conversations with clients enabled me to develop points of research to develop a broader picture of how AFC could best serve its clients. After interviewing clients, I was often tasked with reaching out to social workers that had aided my clients in the past, their schools, the New York City Department of Education, and other relevant agencies to gather more information in order to start building a case.

Once all the relevant information had been gathered, I had the opportunity to draft multiple impartial hearing requests. These were challenging endeavors that required me to advocate for my clients in the best manner possible while developing sound, concise legal arguments that would be used and developed at hearing. This was often a collaborative process and allowed me to work with various staff members through the editing process, enabling me to develop my writing and advocacy skills.

I also had the opportunity to draft mediation requests and participate in mediation sessions. These were interesting opportunities for me to see various parties come together to try and amicably resolve a pending lawsuit. I was impressed by the collegiality of everyone involved and how they worked towards resolving the issue with the best interest of AFC's clients in mind. Apart from participating in the litigation process, I was also able to conduct substantive legal research on the NYC DOE's obligations to make its elementary schools accessible under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

My time at AFC has taught me the value of having organizations like AFC in order to advocate for those who are left behind, helpless, or who simply need a stronger voice to help them achieve their goals. Furthermore, it has helped me to solidify my career goals and has helped me gain valuable skills to help achieve them.

**Milenda Merrill**

J.D. Candidate, 2017

Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Browns Mills, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: Kean University



**Consumer Bankruptcy Assistance Project**

The Maida Public Interest Summer Fellowship, funded my internship with the Consumer Bankruptcy Assistance Project (CBAP) in Philadelphia, PA. My experience with CBAP (a privately funded organization) has been a blessing, thanks to the funding that I received I was able to commute to Philly and not experience any hardships. The funding received allowed me to work in an area of law that my interest was growing. I already knew that I enjoyed learning about bankruptcy but working with Siana Newman (staff attorney) and Maryann Lucey (supervisor) who guided my learning, I realized this is something I could do for the rest of my life and be happy. (Along with charity work for kids) My summer experience with CBAP aided my growth in the bankruptcy code, improved on my communication with clients and I became more comfortable with navigating Best Case.

I had originally thought I would only be dealing with just a limited amount of issues when filing for a client, not realizing that bankruptcy encompasses a wide range of things. For example, viewing a client's tax returns for accuracy. I had to make sure they were in compliance with the federal tax law because I cannot submit anything to the trustee that was false or inaccurate. When the tax returns were false I had to explain to the clients why I could not help them and also give them options on how to proceed in order for them to make the best decision for themselves. Sometimes it was a very stressful situation because the client needed to file bankruptcy. However, they had to decide whether filing bankruptcy was worth it to amend their last year's tax return. If they chose to amend their tax return that could trigger the IRS to go back and review the client's last 3 tax returns. If the IRS did that there was a possibility that the client would be owing the IRS a substantial amount of money.

Primarily I dealt with low income clients that ranged from clients receiving financial assistance to clients who were working. This diversity gave me the ability to learn what to request from clients. I came across a few clients where I had a hard time explaining why I needed certain information to complete their petition. Siana helped me to communicate what to say by explaining their situation and informing me to be confident in requesting what I needed.

**Marian Miawad**  
J.D. Candidate, 2017  
Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Bayonne, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: Rutgers University - Newark College  
of Arts and Sciences

### **American Friends Service Committee**

This past summer, I've had the privilege of working with American Friends Service Committee, an organization committed to social justice, to provide comprehensive legal representation to immigrants seeking resettlement in the US. AFSC's work is based on a belief in the worth of every person, and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice. Working with the Immigrant Rights Program at American Friends Service Committee, during a time where political strife surrounds immigration is the best decision I could have made this summer. Many of these immigrants face dangerous and frightening situations should they be forced to return to their homelands. Now, more than ever, immigrants need passionate individuals to fight for their safe passage. American Friends Service Committee has allowed me to listen to their harrowing stories and witness first-hand the daily struggles they face. This summer, I've helped young women apply for asylum to escape sexual exploitation in their home countries. I've helped young immigrant adults apply for work permits so they can support themselves while they go through college. I've helped immigrants who have waited years, apply for a US citizenship. Advocating for refugees and asylum seekers has been some of the most emotionally draining, but gratifying work that I've done thus far in law school. American Friends Service Committee gave me a chance to provide a helping hand to those who were incapable of speaking for themselves—defending themselves, and ultimately breaking the silence for the disadvantaged. I'm thankful to have been given this opportunity through my Maida funding, to financially undertake and immerse myself in an internship I was passionate about.



**Anastasia Millicker**  
J.D. Candidate, 2019  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Belford, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: Rutgers University

### **New Jersey Institute for Social Justice**

While at NJISJ this summer, I was able to hone my legal writing and research skills through a multitude of projects. Through research with NJISJ, I worked with counsel to oppose the disenfranchisement of New Jersey parolees and probationers on state equal protection ground by researching tax benefits for business owners who hire those reentering the workforce after serving time for their conviction. In addition, I composed language for the NJISJ Juvenile Justice prison-to-pipeline webpage. Following this assignment, I was able to work on an article regarding the Parking Offense Adjudication Act in which I explored the alternative outlets New Jersey could take to avoid introducing individuals into the criminal justice system through a parking ticket.



Throughout the summer, I had the opportunity to take part in brown bag lunches at the ACLU to discuss police brutality and steps toward stopping it, LGBTQ rights in New Jersey and learn more about the history of the ACLU. In addition, to brown bag luncheons, I was able to participate in the NJISJ Gala which honored the President of the ABA and New Jersey native Paulette Brown, I even had the opportunity meet and speak with her. Additionally, all interns were able to attend networking events at Lowenstein in Roselle where I meet with corporate attorneys in the commercial litigation field, in which I have some interest.

Overall, my experience at NJISJ was memorable and wonderful. I was able to make create connections with all staff at the Institute and was provided with a great mentorship. The attorneys there provided critical but constructive feedback on all my assignments and I truly felt as though I was making a difference through my research.





**Fara Momen**

J.D. Candidate, 2018

Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Ontario, CA

Undergraduate Institution: Barnard College - Columbia University

**Kids in Need of Defense**

This summer I had the honor of working for Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) by way of the Maida Fellowship.

KIND provides both direct and pro bono training legal services. These services include representation for clients applying for asylum, stay of removal, special immigrant juvenile status, among others. Unaccompanied minors are a cohort of individuals who entered the United States without permission, often as a result of push factors including violence, poverty, abuse, or neglect in their home country. KIND works to serve unaccompanied minors who are otherwise unable to obtain representation in the legal system.

As a legal intern, I was able to use my skillset obtained in my studies in research, writing, and client management to provide support for attorney's serving unaccompanied minors. I researched issues, histories, and data that would ultimately contribute to briefs on behalf of clients, and also authored major portions of briefs which were submitted to the asylum officers making determinations of relief status to be granted, if any.

My position was specifically focused on clients that qualify for asylum applications. Each assignment started with reading the file up to that point, reviewing intake notes, documents submitted by the client, and any existing support material. It was my duty to identify the factors that qualified each particular client for a consideration of asylum, and research for everything possible that would support their claim. Often that began with country condition reports which provided well-documented details of how their lives are at risk as a result of their fitting a profile that was targeted by a specific ongoing issue within the country. There are several layers to an asylum claim, including showing that the client's profile features particularities that are immutable, and further, all other options for the applicant have otherwise been exhausted to their best efforts. This is a painstaking process for both the clients who are struggling to provide details they are often embarrassed or have great difficulty sharing, but also challenging for the attorney who is combing through their file and trying to connect the existing dots that are almost hidden or diluted in other facts they have heard from the client.

The most important part of the position was producing a clear and consistent legal brief for the asylum application, addressing the circumstances that made it dangerous for the applicant to return with substantial evidence. The most important part of my job within the context of the position was hearing the client's stories and making sure they were effectively advocated for. Since these minors have no other opportunity for relief, and are incredibly more likely to be denied relief if without representation, the work I was able to do for KIND was very meaningful

## Momen Continued

and educational. The opportunity to touch so many lives, and make any impact at all is part of the blessing of having received a Maida grant and paying it forward like the Maida's have done by granting me this opportunity. I am proud to be a part of the inaugural class of Maida Fellows.

**Gemini A. Nazareno, Jr.**  
J.D. Candidate, 2017  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Old Bridge, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: Rutgers University

### **Philadelphia District Attorney's Office**

This summer, I served as a Certified Legal Intern with the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office. The Philadelphia District Attorney's Office is the largest prosecutor's office in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It is also one of the largest in the nation. It serves the more than 1.5 million citizens of the City and County of Philadelphia. The District Attorney's Office employs about 600 lawyers, detectives, and support staff. The District Attorney represents the City and County of Philadelphia in all criminal prosecutions. During the 10-week summer internship, I completed a weeklong training, followed by 3-week rotations in the Juvenile Court Unit, the Northwest Division Bureau, and the South Division Bureau, respectively. As a Certified Legal Intern, I prepared and prosecuted felony and misdemeanor preliminary hearings and certain felony and misdemeanor trials in Philadelphia Municipal Court, Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas, and Family Court of Philadelphia. Under the guidance of skilled Assistant District Attorneys, I prosecuted the following crimes: retail theft, automobile theft, receiving stolen property, robbery, burglary, possession of marijuana, knowing and intentional possession of a controlled substance, possession with the intent to deliver a controlled substance, possession of an instrument of a crime, prostitution, public intoxication, recklessly endangering another person, simple assault, aggravated assault, and conspiracy. In conjunction with the prosecution of the aforementioned crimes, I performed necessary research and analysis for specific criminal cases. I also conducted investigations, subpoenaed, interviewed, and prepared witnesses, reviewed criminal complaints, documents, and other discovery, made plea deals for defendants and discussed the terms with public defenders and private defense counsel. Overall, I gained invaluable experience in trial advocacy, courtroom procedure, and assuring the integrity and fairness of the justice system. None of this would be possible without the generous summer funding provided by James and Sharon Maida through the Maida Public Interest Fellowship Program. I would like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Maida for their dedication and support of the Rutgers Law School and its public interest legal community.



**Zachary Ostrow**

J.D. Candidate, 2017

Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Trevese, PA

Undergraduate Institution: The College of New Jersey

**Child and Family Advocacy Clinic**

Shortly before the end of my first year of law school, I was thrilled to learn that I had been selected to work with the Rutgers Law School Child and Family Advocacy Clinic. To have the chance to participate in this exceptional program would have been an excellent opportunity on its own; however, the additional bonus of receiving Maida funding was truly a blessing which allowed me to fully dedicate myself to obtaining invaluable legal experience.

The Child and Family Advocacy Clinic provides free legal services to families and children in great need. This summer we worked on obtaining SSI funding for a child with special needs and represented children in abuse and neglect cases. I got to meet face-to face with our clients, gather the records and information necessary for their cases, and directly contribute to the documents used in their court proceedings. It was wonderful to watch their circumstances slowly improve and I am very proud to have contributed to that steady progress.

The Clinic also partnered with a life changing program, the First Star Academy, which provides foster youths the opportunity to live on a college campus for a month and have access to educational opportunities, travel experiences, and a positive familial environment. The goal of the program is to provide these children with a stable support system and to ultimately offer them a viable path to college. I was privileged to witness first-hand the positive life-changing impact that this program has had for the students involved and I sincerely hope to continue to participate in this outstanding initiative.

I would like to personally thank the Maida funders for their generous gift to the Rutgers Public Interest Law Program. I am honored to have been a part of the tremendous positive impact that this investment has had.



**Maria José Padilla**

J.D. Candidate, 2017

Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Middletown, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: State University of NY - Binghamton

**Office of Pro Se Litigation – Southern District of New York**

I am very grateful for the Maida Fellowship that allowed me to intern at the Office of Pro Se Litigation for the Southern District of New York. Through this experience, not only did I gain invaluable mentors, but my strong writing skills improved tremendously throughout the summer. The substantive legal skills I learned will stay with me as I develop into a public interest attorney.



As an intern, I reviewed all initiating pleadings filed by pro se litigants and then drafted bench memos and orders for the Chief Judge as well as for assigned judges. Each staff attorney that I worked with had the patience to guide and teach me until I had the confidence to carry out the screening of pro se cases on my own. With their supervision, I decided whether pro se complaints should be amended, dismissed, or assigned to a judge with recommendations. To carry out my work, I had to familiarize myself with many areas of law and work very efficiently. I researched and wrote memos and orders concerning diverse matters, such as employment discrimination, conditions of confinement in prisons, and habeas corpus. It was extremely rewarding to help safeguard the constitutional rights of pro se litigants.

This internship was more than I expected. I enjoyed meeting federal judges and learning about their career paths. It was also extremely enlightening to watch opening and closing statements, arraignments, and even naturalizations.

I would not have been able to experience this wonderful opportunity without Maida's financial support. Thank you very much.

**Agustin Paneque**  
J.D. Candidate, 2018  
Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: North Bergen, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: New York University, College of Arts and Sciences

### **American Friends Service Committee**

My Maida Public Interest Fellowship experience at American Friends Service Committee during the summer of 2016 played an essential role in building a specific and desired set of both legal and professional interdisciplinary skills. I predominately worked on asylum cases with a very hands on group of attorney's separated within the American Friend's service Committee office as the "Detention Team." I quickly grew accustomed to learning essential research and writing norms of the immigration law practice by accumulating country conditions and Index's for specific cases. These were used in court to help the judge understand both why the asylee was facing persecution and how the gravity of the situation at hand should be deliberated upon in building a verdict. Likewise, I gathered evidence for the clients by visiting courts in Newark, Essex County, the Bronx, Brooklyn and Manhattan to gather court dispositions. By both visiting courts and frequently calling and faxing courts to gather information vital to a case I learned how to deal with arguably arduous legal work efficiently while learning the value in achieving these tasks. I gained firsthand knowledge of the importance of it in numerous situations, one of noteworthiness being when I uncovered past criminal history of a client which was not on his file and which possibly relieved the client of going through a second and more impactful criminal proceeding in immigration court in the future. Building relationships with the cliental successfully and handling assignments without argue were two of the comments my supervisors politely gave me before leaving the office. By handling cases with the detention team and taking on clients in other departments in the office (predominately taking on DACA and TPS clients) I learned how important it is to stay personable and accomplish tasks immediately to keep an office working like a well oiled machine. Last, my experience lobbying in Washington D.C. was absolutely the most impactful and enjoyable opportunities I had working with the American Friends Service Committee since it gave me such intimate first hand knowledge of the hot legislative debate over immigration at both of its two major sources Congress Offices in Washington D.C. and with the immigrant's seeking protection within the United States themselves.



**Danielle Panizzi**  
J.D. Candidate, 2018  
Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Matawan, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: Rutgers University, School of Arts  
& Sciences



### **Volunteer Lawyers for Justice**

This summer, I interned at Volunteer Lawyers for Justice in Newark, New Jersey as a Maida Public Interest Fellow. I am so grateful to have had an internship at VLJ as the first step on my legal journey. Last year, VLJ assisted 3,460 people and provided \$1.8 million in free legal services. Their mission is to improve the lives of economically-disadvantaged adults, children, and families in New Jersey by empowering them with legal tools and advice to ensure fair treatment in the legal system. My favorite part of my experience at VLJ was assisting at their pro-bono clinics in Essex County. I volunteered at the consumer, divorce, and child support clinics. At the clinics, I helped draft pleadings and motions. From helping the clients, I learned very quickly how intimidating the judicial process can be for pro-se litigants. At the consumer clinic, I performed research and created sample motion templates for litigants to use. It was also an invaluable experience getting to observe the attorneys as they met with clients. Additionally, at the office, I was able to assist clients with the discovery process, prepare attorney trainings on specific clinics, and observe family court proceedings.

Another memorable experience was participating in VLJ's Children's Representation Program. VLJ provides families with the representation to ensure children with special education needs receive the appropriate school education to which they are entitled. As one project, I assisted a student and his parent with negotiating the student's Individualized Education Plan with the district. When I was able to meet with the student, he told both myself and the senior attorney that he wants to be a lawyer when he gets older so he could help "kids like him." It was this experience that sparked my interest to pursue education law. In addition, I was given the opportunity to attend VLJ's "Summer Soiree Against Bullying," run by its Generation Now Young Professionals Group. At the event, VLJ raised \$21,000 for anti-bullying efforts in schools.

Thanks to the Maida fellowship, I was able to have the unique opportunity of honing my legal skills while helping my community. I was introduced to many clients and attorneys whose experiences fueled my passion to pursue public interest law. Volunteer Lawyers for Justice gave me the opportunities to gain both writing skills client and communication skills. In the spring, I will continue to volunteer at VLJ's Consumer Law Clinic. I am honored to have participated in the Maida Public Interest Fellowship Program, and look forward to representing Rutgers' public interest programs in the future.

**Nicholas S. Pradaxay**  
J.D. Candidate, 2018  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Gainesville, FL  
Undergraduate Institution: University of Florida



### **Civil Practice Clinic**

This past summer I was fortunate enough to perform work for the Rutgers Civil Practice Clinic. During my time at the Civil Practice Clinic, I advocated and prepared legal documents on behalf of low-income residents of South Jersey. The type of cases I worked on included guardianship cases, expungement, and other civil cases. I really enjoyed the advocacy aspect to the position. The experience showed me what it was like to actually play the role as lawyer for the client. The real client interaction and multiple deadlines and sub-headlines to keep up with really replicates what it would be like to be an attorney working in a firm. The best part about the position was the autonomy that came with the position. Case strategy and decisions on how to handle problems in the case fell mostly on me as a student intern and that made the position exciting.

Before coming to law school, public interest work wasn't necessarily what I wanted to get into or thought about getting involved with. After this summer, I believe that public interest work is an aspect of the law that every law student should be exposed to. Whether through internships, pro bono work, or student organizations, public interest is a great reminder of our overall future roles as lawyers. As a lawyer, your role is to be an advocate. As an advocate, you are ultimately helping a person, organization, or cause that is in need of help, and they are looking to you for that help. Law school and all it entails is no doubt stressful and it is easy to get caught up in the hoopla of grades and job searches. I believe that public interest work is a great reminder that we as students are being educated to be competent attorneys who can make a difference in the world, and I believe that it's a reminder that all law students should experience. The Maida Foundation I believe shares this vision and I believe our school is blessed to have this type of program.



**Farah Rahaman**

J.D. Candidate, 2019

Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Rahway, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: Barnard College - Columbia University



**Essex County Public Defender's Office - Juvenile**

This summer, I was able to have my dream internship with the Juvenile Section of the Essex County Public Defender’s Office thanks to the Maida grant. Without this grant I would not have been able to engage in the type of practice that I hope to continue doing after graduation. As a legal intern at the Juvenile Section, the only solely juvenile practice in the state, I was able to appear before the Juvenile judge every day. I was responsible for representing juveniles appearing for their probable cause and detention hearings. It was up to me to present the argument to the judge as to why the children appearing before her should be sent home with their parents rather than detained in the detention center until their case was heard. Doing the detention hearings taught me how to successfully interview clients and partner with the child welfare system and therapeutic services to ensure the best outcome for the juvenile. Most importantly, I was able to learn practical skills, such as how to appear in a judge’s court, where to go when I had questions and needed assistance, and how to negotiate with the prosecutor’s office to find a middle ground that we could agree upon. At the end of the internship, I was able to secure a clerkship with the Juvenile judge I had appeared before, which I am sure was due to the fact that I was able to appear before her every day and she was able to become familiar with my work ethic and professionalism.



**Angela-Patricia Ramos**  
J.D. Candidate, 2019  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Guayanilla, Puerto Rico  
Undergraduate Institution: University of Puerto Rico

### **NJ Attorney General - Tort Litigation - Workers' Compensation**

What are the American ideals? They are the development of the individual for his own and the common good; the development of the individual through liberty; and the attainment of the common good through democracy and social justice. – Associate Justice Louis D. Brandeis

Throughout my life, I've known myself to be passionate about a great many things. Politics, theatre, helping others in my community in Puerto Rico; you name it. It took a long time for me to figure out how to combine these passions and channel them towards a goal, or set of goals, that was bigger and more impactful than myself. I knew I had a particularly linear thought process that allowed me to synthesize distinct points of view into one cohesive argument. I knew I was as comfortable in a crowded room as I was speaking to a single individual. But most importantly, I knew that in me existed an overwhelming drive to speak on behalf of those who could speak for themselves. All of these qualities diverged at a single point: pursuing a career in the public interest.

In order to accomplish this end, I chose the law. Ever since I've been in law school, I've been preoccupied with the concept of fairness. This preoccupation blossomed into an intellectual curiosity when I was exposed to the topic of Workers' Compensation in my Employment law course last spring. I decided to apply to the Office of the Attorney General's Division of Law for my 2L summer internship in order to see this area of interest in a real world setting. Within that office I was fortunately assigned to the Division of Workers' Compensation of the Tort Litigation section.

For ten weeks, I saw in practice what I had considered to be a fair system in theory. A system that balances the economic interests of employers with the health, well-being, and safety of the workers they employ. I worked directly with Deputy Attorney Generals and assisted them in a variety of legal research and writing assignments that covered issues arising within the area of Workers' Compensation. Issues ranging from who qualifies as an employee, and what qualifies as an injury, to what benefits a person who has already qualified is entitled to receive from their employer. What I saw in that office was a culture of equity and concern for the public good. I very much enjoyed that it was never an "us versus them" mentality, but rather a sense of ethics and fairness that rarely seen in a system of justice that is adversarial by definition.

## Ramos Continued

Had it not been for the incredible generosity of the Maidas and the Rutgers Law School Public Interest Fellowship, I would not have had this amazingly fulfilling experience. I am immensely grateful to everyone who was involved in this program, to my supervisors at the Office of the Attorney General, and to the Rutgers Law School for their continuous commitment to public service. Thank you.

**John H. Rinaldi**  
J.D. Candidate, 2019  
Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Moorestown, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: Fordham University



### **Essex-Newark Legal Services**

I spent my summer working at Essex-Newark Legal Services in their SSI/Elder Law unit. My duties during the summer were to provide low-income clients with representation during their administrative hearings. I spent the previous semester learning the basics of social security regulation and procedure under Rachael Grant-Kinnear, the managing attorney of the unit and during the summer I was given my own cases to handle on my own. Representation in administrative hearings was far more involved than I originally thought. Some of the things I would do are requesting and reviewing medical records, crafting my theory of the case based on Social Security regulation, writing briefs to Administrative Law Judges, and, of course, actual representation at the hearing. The hearings were actually wonderful opportunities to develop essential lawyering skills. I would conduct a direct examination of my client to ensure that they touch upon all of the important aspects of their claims. After this, I would conduct a cross-examination of the medical or vocational expert hired by Social Security to provide the judge with information regarding jobs in the economy and provide a second opinion about medical records.

Probably the most useful skill I developed during my summer was working directly with clients. On intake days I was responsible for interviewing clients and making decisions about whether or not we would take their case. While difficult, it taught me the valuable skill of learning how to give a client bad news or reject a matter. In addition to working on Social Security claims, I was also involved in handling debt collection matters, wills, and powers of attorney for senior clients.

Essex-Newark Legal services is a regional branch of Legal Services of New Jersey located in Newark New Jersey. ENLS handles a wide range of civil matters for low-income clients including family, consumer, public benefits, housing, bankruptcy, and others.

All in all, I am incredibly grateful for receiving funding as it has allowed me to pursue my career in public interest. I have been able to do some of the most fulfilling work I have ever had the opportunity to do and I have nobody but the generous funders of this program for that.

**Taylor M. Ruggieri**  
J.D. Candidate, 2017  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Flemington, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: Stockton University



### **NJ Attorney General - State Police and Corrections**

I worked in the State Police and Corrections Department of the Attorney General's Office this summer. The timing was absolutely perfect as I had just finished taking the Civil Rights Litigation: Current Issues class with Professor Ricks. The class focused on §1983 litigation and issues, which are the types of issues I worked on this summer. Many of the cases I did research for involved inmates bringing Constitutional Claims against guards and the prison. One inmate brought a claim because of the temperature of the water in his shower.

I also had the opportunity to sit in on multiple depositions, which was a learning experience. I learned about the rules explained first, how attorneys interject and object during the deposition, and the opportunity to ask questions of your own client at the end.

I went on two tours this summer that were offered to interns. The first I went on was to the medical examiners office in Newark, NJ. That trip was phenomenal because I learned about the evidence and protocol for doing an autopsy. The autopsy itself can tell detectives and lawyers so much about the case. It was also a great experience in broadening my horizons and stepping outside of my comfort zone.

The second tour I went on was at the New Jersey State Prison, which made me sad. The one area that is the oldest part of the prison gets so hot and so cold depending on the weather and it just seems so depressing to live in those conditions.

This summer taught me a lot about who I am and what I want to do. I have always been very defense oriented and pro-defendants' rights. But seeing another side of the public interest sector, defending guards and officers in their civil rights cases showed me the balance. I am now considering a career at the Attorney General's Office, Public Defender's Office, and the Prosecutors Office.

This summer really opened my eyes because it was a part of the public interest that I had never really seen before.

**Khushbu Solanki**  
J.D. Candidate, 2017  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Kendall Park, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: Kean University



### **AIDS Law Project**

It was my honor to represent Rutgers University School of Law as a Maida Public Interest Summer Fellow at the AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania with the gracious support of the Maida Partners Program. I was interested in the AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania because it serves a very unique subset of the underserved and vulnerable communities that Public Interest Law serves as a whole.

Through this internship, I learned about the legal issues faced by people living with HIV/AIDS. These issues include getting public benefits like Social Security Disability Insurance and Welfare, housing and utility problems, probate matters like Last Will and Testament and Medical Power of Attorney, immigration status problems, domestic violence, various forms of discrimination, etc.

I highly value the diversity of work I undertook because I was able to learn about and gain experience in a variety of areas of law which not only increased my general knowledge but also helped me ascertain my ultimate career goals. Furthermore, in addition to learning about these areas of law, client interaction was paramount. I conducted client intake over the phone, by mail, or in person at least twice a week. This interaction not only helped hone my people skills but also my issue spotting ability. All of these opportunities however, would have been for naught if not for the incredibly supportive and encouraging supervising attorneys at the AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania.

I hope my experience at the AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania allows me to help bridge the gap between the public's general image of those living with HIV/AIDS and the reality which is that they are like anyone else and face many of the same legal issues that the average person faces. Overall, I highly recommend not only the AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania but also the Maida Partners Program.

**Peter Szafranski**  
J.D. Candidate, 2017  
Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Maplewood, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: The College of New Jersey

### **Legal Aid Society**



This summer I interned at the Harlem office of the Legal Aid Society. Specifically I was working for their Disability Advocacy Project. My supervising attorney was Edlyn Willer. I was fortunate in having Edlyn Willer as a supervising attorney in that she did Single Stop advocacy twice a week. Single Stop advocacy is when clients come in with various problems and the attorney does their best to resolve the issue on the spot. If that isn't possible then they take the case. It was always a treat to see her in action and learn a fraction of what she knows about law of various kinds.

In addition to observing Single Stop advocacy, and at times participating by asking questions of my own, I was also assigned some cases. One case was a remaining family member case. I was tasked with research on various issues in the case. Later I was to prepare witnesses for the hearing. While I was originally supposed to present at that hearing it was adjourned until September for reasons beyond my control. However I still learned how to prepare an opening and a direct as well as how to prepare clients for a hearing.

I was also tasked with looking through the file on a Social Security ("SS") case to see if the client qualifies for benefits. Here I got to practice reading through official reports and comparing the facts of the case to Social Security's listing. Even though it seemed like our client was just beyond the parameters set by SS, I suggested further tests that might be run and offered my best argument for how we might stand a chance to get SSI for our client.

Finally I also successfully filed a name change and got plenty of time shadowing attorneys at various hearings.

I also wanted to add that I'm very grateful for the grant. It covered transportation costs to and from my internship and the balance of my tuition.

**Amelia Vangellow**  
J.D. Candidate, 2017  
Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Fairport, NY  
Undergraduate Institution: Nazareth College



### **Community Legal Services**

I had a truly rewarding summer experience thanks to the Maida Fellowship program. This summer I spent ten weeks at Community Legal Services (CLS) in Philadelphia, in their Aging and Disabilities Unit. CLS has a unique legal services model in which they represent individual clients, while also working on policy change and community education. I was very fortunate to have a wonderful supervisor and mentor at CLS, a supervising attorney in the Aging and Disabilities Unit. I learned so much from my supervisor, the other attorneys, paralegals, and social workers.

At CLS, I worked with individuals with disabilities in securing necessary benefits and services, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid waiver services. I interviewed clients, reviewed medical records, and helped my clients solve issues they had with the Social Security Administration (SSA). I also prepared an extensive report with the supervising attorney of the Language Access Project on how the SSA's field offices serve clients who have a limited English proficiency. The last week of my internship, I was able to represent a client at an SSI appeal hearing before an administrative law judge.

I also had the chance to learn about many other areas of the law within legal services. I attended trainings on topics such as Medical assistance, Medicaid waiver programs, Medicare, benefits for immigrants, expungement law, SNAP, TANF, and LIHEAP. We also had weekly meetings for all the summer interns, so there was a great sense of community among the interns.

I have also been able to learn a lot from the other Maida recipients at Rutgers in speaking with them about their public interest summer experiences at the Social Justice Workshop Series. I am incredibly thankful to the Maida program, as it allowed me to learn and grow.



**Erin Yerke**

J.D. Candidate, 2017

Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Moorestown, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: Fordham University



**Federal Public Defender’s Office– Camden**

I spent the summer after my 2L year working for the Federal Public Defender’s Office in Camden. At that point, I had interned at the Court of Common Pleas in Philadelphia during my first summer and externed with an appellate judge in New Jersey for a semester. Both experiences involved research and drafting opinions that were balanced and objective. This summer I wanted to work on my persuasive writing skills within the adversarial context of the legal world. I also gravitated toward public interest areas, due to my non-profit background and interest in social justice.

In late February, I accepted one of the two local summer intern positions at the Federal PD. I was able to focus full-time on my work there because of support from the James and Sharon Maida Foundation. Without it, I would have had to work part-time and find a paying position. In thirty-five hours a week, there was enough time to work on several projects, talk to all the attorneys, learn about their different styles, visit occasional court hearings, and visit the municipal court at Fort Dix on two occasions.

Besides learning about the intricacies of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, I had the opportunity to meet clients and make policy arguments. This often meant showing that the human reality of people’s situations warranted a variance from their recommended sentences according to the Federal Sentencing Guidelines. In other cases, I wrote memos for the assigned attorneys that covered custody, search and seizure, warrants, etc. As the summer progressed, the attorneys were more familiar with my writing and gave me more nuanced assignments, including research on a culpability issue in a criminal waste case. I also attended a re-entry court program one night with one of the public defenders. It was another opportunity to learn more about the criminal justice system that I would not have had were it not for the ability to dedicate my entire summer to this public interest position.

**Alexandra A. Zeiger**  
J.D. Candidate, 2018  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Haverford, PA  
Undergraduate Institution: University of Minnesota



### **Pennsylvania Innocence Project**

My summer at the Pennsylvania Innocence Project was both rewarding and informative. First, I now, have a wealth of knowledge about the uphill battle one faces who was wrongfully convicted and how Pennsylvania PCRA (Post-Conviction Relief Act) Laws make it exceedingly more difficult to prove innocence. Second, I was able to give hope to three men, who have been in prison longer than I have been alive. I spent nearly my entire summer gathering, dissecting, and analyzing trial materials from their case. My condensed investigative report of the case totaled over 100 pages. Towards the end of the summer, I was fortunate enough to visit two of these three men in prison. I spoke with them about their case, prison life, and their families. I was in awe of their dedication, perseverance, and the appreciation they had for the Project's assistance. During my last week at the Project, my summer work culminated in a presentation of the case to a review committee, who approved the case for further investigation. The next day, I listened to tears of joy from one of the men's wives as a staff attorney relayed the good news and explained the steps for moving forward. Besides working on "my case", I attended hearings at the Criminal Justice Center and the Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas, attended a board meeting, and had weekly staff meeting. Beyond the scope of the Project, I gained practical knowledge about how to conduct myself in a court room, the governance of non-profits, and how I (when I become an attorney) can balance a demanding job with public interest work and pro bono opportunities.

# **2016 Maida Post- Graduate Public Interest Fellowship**

## **Joshua Bauers '15, Working for Fair Housing**

February 28, 2017



**Joshua Bauers worked at the Fair Share Housing Center on his post-graduate fellowship.**

When Joshua Bauers '15 was a student at Rutgers Law School in Camden, he worked on several pro bono projects, including the Street Law and Domestic Violence projects, and helping at a restorative project for juveniles at Youth Court.

Bauers, who had studied to be a social worker as an Undergraduate Institutionuate, said he was inspired to go to law school, in part, because he knew he could be a more effective advocate for his clients as an attorney.

After completing an internship at Fair Share Housing Center between his 2L and 3L years, he stayed in touch with the nonprofit and they agreed to sponsor him for a fellowship proposal. FSHC, based in Cherry Hill, defends housing rights for low-income residents by ensuring that municipalities across New Jersey meet their Mt. Laurel obligations. The Mount Laurel Doctrine was a landmark court decision in New Jersey that requires communities to provide their fair share of affordable housing for people in need.

With the help of Rutgers Law School's first Maida Fellowship, Bauers was able to work at the non-profit for a year, from August 2015 to 2016, where his work centered on reviewing fair share housing plans prepared by municipalities experiencing redevelopment. Josh's work has often led to settlements where the municipality and FSHC agree upon fair share obligations and the mechanisms to meet those obligations.

"My job is to review the fair share plans to ensure they provide adequate opportunities for low-income individuals and families," he said. "When a plan doesn't meet the town's obligation to provide affordable housing," he said, "We work with them to develop more opportunities either in zoning for inclusionary development, construction of supportive housing for folks with disabilities, encouraging non-profits like Habitat for Humanity to get involved, or a number of other avenues for creating affordable housing."

Though his fellowship formally ended in August 2016, the agency, headed by Rutgers Law alumnus Kevin Walsh '99, has kept him on as a staff attorney. That opportunity, Bauers said, would not have been possible without the Maida funding.

Bauers' fellowship was part of the Maida Public Interest Scholars Program, which was made possible through the generosity of James and Dr. Sharon Maida. It was established in 2015 to acknowledge, support and sustain public interest legal work by students and graduates of Rutgers Law School. The program supports Maida Summer Fellowships and the Maida Post-Graduate Public Interest Fellowship Bauers received. Fair Share Housing Center is continuing as a Maida Partner this Summer and will be hosting a Rising 2L for a Summer Fellowship.

“Without a Maida Fellowship, they just didn't have the funding to make it happen,” he said. “In my yearlong fellowship I was able to focus my efforts in several counties including Bergen and Morris Counties and because the other attorneys were focused in other parts of the State, Fair Share Housing Center wouldn't have been able to be as active in those places without me.”

He said the funding allowed him to work on different cases and learn the regulations, without taking precious time and resources away from the other staff attorneys.

During the time Bauers has been at Fair Share, the organization shared in an important state Supreme Court victory for tens of thousands of New Jersey families when the court ruled that towns were responsible for meeting housing needs which accumulated during the 16-year “gap period” when the state's Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) was not functioning properly.

Bauers said his goal is to continue working in housing to ensure that decent, safe, affordable housing is available for even the poorest in our State., “Few things directly impact a person's overall existence as much as where they live, it dictates where your children will attend school, whether you are likely to be a victim of a crime, and it

affects your chances of landing a good paying job or any job at all, and so many other central parts of our lives. With the work I am doing at Fair Share I truly feel that I am having a tremendous impact on the lives of thousands of people.”

James Maida, a 1990 graduate of the Rutgers Law School in Camden, and his wife Sharon made a \$1 million gift to the law school in 2015 to support pro bono and public interest initiatives. In addition to the post-graduate fellowship, which funds the full-time salary of a selected fellow working in the public interest, the Maida gift also provides funding for up to 40 students each summer to work for public interest legal organizations in positions that are normally unpaid.

*Rutgers Law Media Contacts:*

*Mike Sepanic (Camden); Elizabeth Moore (Newark)*