



Maida Public Interest Fellowships Program  
2019 Report

# Maida Public Interest Fellowships Program 2019 Report

Dear James and Sharon,

The impact of the Maida Public Interest Fellowships Program is breathtaking. What began with your impulse to do something positive has become a force for justice in the state of New Jersey and a major component of the law school's success.

In summer 2019, you funded 41 students from Camden and Newark to work at nonprofits ranging from the ACLU, to various prosecutors' offices, to the Neighborhood Defender Association. They contributed 16,400 hours of legal work to move the needle on civil rights, care for children and elders, justice in the workplace, and many other worthwhile causes. They learned substantive law and technical skills and continued to internalize the pro bono ethic that we work to inculcate in all our students. Some students have been kept on for school-year internships at their summer placements, and they are deeply grateful for the opportunity to continue to serve.

Your fifth post-graduate fellow, Dan Oates, is working at Homebase, a non-profit legal policy organization in San Francisco with the mission of preventing and ending homelessness; their efforts support communities all across America. Dan is currently analyzing whether, under relevant law, a locality's homeless information system may share data with other service providers for the purpose of creating more effective, preventive programming; he also is analyzing the pros and cons of sharing such information. Before the end of his Fellowship, he will have created a homelessness prevention toolkit that will enable communities to select and implement proven solutions. The toolkit will be especially helpful in New Jersey because of the right to counsel in Newark's housing court and the creation of the state's new Office of Homelessness Prevention.

Your fourth post-graduate fellow, Tyler Dougherty, spent the year at the New Jersey Office of the Public Defender, working on *Miller* re-sentencings, a second chance at fairer sentencing for people who committed crimes when they were children. Tyler has earned a second fellowship, this one based at Rutgers in Newark, where she is collecting and tracking data on the NJ criminal and juvenile legal systems, with a focus on corrections. She is also providing post-disposition representation for children who are incarcerated. Deanna Christian, your third post-graduate fellow, is working in the private sector. Alexi Velez remains at Perkins Coie, where, among other civil rights efforts, she works to challenge voter suppression laws designed to disenfranchise young, impoverished, elderly, and disabled voters. And Josh Bauers continues to fight for fair housing for people in New Jersey with low incomes.

Five graduates whom you funded as summer interns are also serving as post-graduate fellows with prestigious national organizations:

- Joanna Gardner, whom you funded for two summers, is a Skadden Fellow at HIAS, representing immigrant women who have been subject to human trafficking;

- Ashley Maddison, also funded by the Maida Program for two summers, is an Equal Justice Works Fellow at the Medical Legal Partnership between Rutgers Law and the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers, where she is helping people with chronic and serious illnesses resolve civil legal problems including fines and fees, and will be advocating for systems change in the municipal court system;
- Tamara Anaie is an Immigrant Justice Fellow at the Center for Immigrant Representation in New Jersey, helping detained immigrants;
- Kathryn Robinson is a Rural Justice Fellow at California Rural Legal Assistance; and
- Amelia Vangellow, another two summer Maida, is an Equal Justice Works Fellow at Kids in Need of Defense in New Jersey.

As you know, the Maida Public Interest Fellowships Program has deepened our relationships with legal nonprofits throughout New Jersey and in Philadelphia and has, without question, helped us to build the Social Justice Scholars Program, in which we enrolled nine new first year students this year. The Scholars organized a “Know Your Rights Summit” for the Camden community for Saturday, November 2, with panels for the public on SSI, immigrants’ rights, juvenile justice, voters’ rights, and many others. We are so pleased that the students are using their legal education to empower members of the local community.

We hope you and your family enjoyed the opportunity to interact with your students in Camden last April, and we look forward to greeting you in Newark later this month. We couldn’t do this without you. We deeply appreciate your willingness to consider continuing and even expanding your support for this transformative program. As always, we are happy to discuss it with you at any time.

Respectfully submitted,



Jill Friedman  
Associate Dean for Pro Bono and Public Interest



Kimberly Mutcherson  
Co-Dean and Professor of Law



# **2019 Maida Summer Fellowships**

## 2019 Maida Summer Fellowships

Sabah	Abbasi	Newark	Brennan Center for Justice
Maryanne	Abdelmesih	Newark	Eastern Environmental Law Center
Riley	Anderson	Camden	Child and Family Advocacy Clinic
Robert	Andrade	Camden	City Attorney's Office of San Francisco
Amir	Botros	Newark	Kids In Need of Defense
Soundous	Bouchouar	Newark	Immigrant Rights Clinic's Immigrant Legal Services & Policy Project
Arabelis	Brito	Camden	The Vera Institute of Justice's Guardianship Project
Edwin	Casas Prieto	Camden	American Friends Service Committee
Abigail	Cook	Camden	ACLU - PA
Alecsandria	Cook	Camden	Neighborhood Defender Service – Immigration Defense Practice
Joanna	Daly	Camden	Philadelphia Public Defender's Office
Juliana	Davis	Camden	Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office
Derek	Demeri	Camden	Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office
Samantha	DiTroia	Camden	Coalition Against Rape & Abuse
Margaret	Fiori	Newark	New Jersey Institute for Social Justice
Caitlin	Flynn	Camden	New Jersey Attorney General Division of Criminal Justice
Mychal	Giansanti	Camden	New Jersey Federal Defender
Diego	Gonzalez	Newark	Kids In Need of Defense
Cindy	Guaman	Newark	Make the Road - NJ
Noel	Hanrahan	Camden	Abolitionist Law Center
LaNee	Isom	Camden	U.S. Attorney's Office
Aryn	Keyel	Camden	ACLU - PA
Megan	Mallon	Camden	New Jersey Office of the Public Defender
Victoria	Manuel	Newark	Volunteer Lawyers for Justice
David	Marx	Newark	Mississippi Center for Justice
Morgan	McGoughran	Newark	Rutgers Law School - Newark Clinic – Human Rights
John	McHenry	Camden	New Jersey Office of the Public Defender
Kelly	McNaughton	Newark	Partners for Women & Justice
Jennifer	Monge	Newark	ACLU - NJ
Natima	Neily	Camden	Philadelphia VIP
Claire	Newsome	Camden	New York Attorney General's Office – Antitrust Division
Jake	Novelli	Camden	New Jersey Office of the Public Defender – Camden County
Conner	Porterfield	Camden	Rutgers Law School - Camden Clinic – Child and Family Advocacy and Expungement
Jaime	Portillo	Newark	Community Health Law Project
Salma	Salloum	Newark	American Friends Service Committee
Ryan	Slocum	Camden	South Jersey Legal Services
Jason	Stump	Camden	Community Legal Services
Gerard	Tyrrell	Camden	Rutgers Law School - Camden Clinic – Immigrant Justice
Mario	Valdivia	Camden	Wage Justice Center and Los Angeles District Attorney's Office
Micauri	Vargas	Newark	Community Health Law Project
Destiney	Wilson	Camden	NJ Office of the Law Guardian – Ewing and Hudson Counties

**Sabah Abbasi**

J.D. Candidate, 2021

Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Montgomery, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: Rutgers University

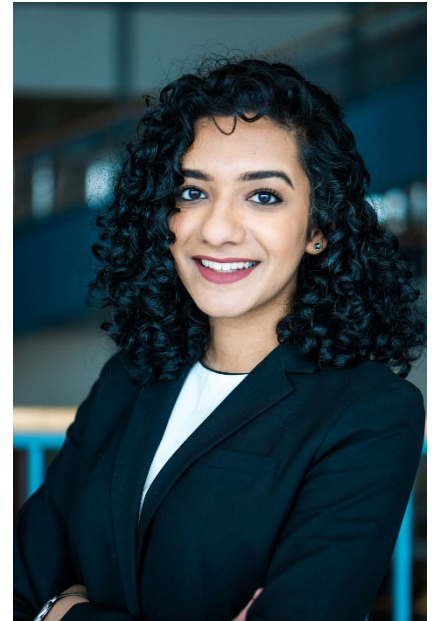
**Brennan Center for Justice**

This summer, I was a Legal Intern in the Justice Program at the Brennan Center for Justice. I worked under the supervision of Lauren-Brooke Eisen, the Acting Director of the Justice Program, and Matthew Menendez, Senior Counsel.

I was mainly involved in the final stages of a forthcoming report related to the economic impact of imposing and collecting criminal fees and fines, particularly for low-income communities and people of color. I was fortunate to have been able to play a substantial role in researching and writing certain sections of the report to provide context for the quantitative findings. I also participated in editing and a thorough qualitative fact-checking process for the final drafts of the report.

Aside from this project, I also worked on some of the Justice Program’s partnerships with other organizations. This involved participating in planning meetings, drafting memos and outlines for potential reports and articles, and editing and footnoting articles for publication. I was also able to work on my own research project. I spent much of the summer writing a memo on my findings. This memo will be used by the Brennan Center for background research as it develops a potentially new area of attention for its Justice Program.

I am extremely grateful for being a recipient of the Maida fellowship. My internship at the Brennan Center was a full-time, 12-week position, and without the financial support from the Maida fellowship, it would have been extremely difficult for me to commit all of my time this summer to making the most of the opportunity. Being a full-time intern allowed me to gain valuable insight into the structure and workings of policy development in the legal field, and I developed strong relationships with new mentors at the Brennan Center.



**Maryanne Abdelmesih**  
J.D. Candidate, 2020  
Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Hoboken, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: Rutgers University

### **Eastern Environmental Law Center**

This summer I worked as a legal intern at Eastern Environmental Law Center, a nonprofit environmental law organization located in Newark, New Jersey. Eastern Environmental Law Center is involved in various types of work, including Air Pollution Reduction, Energy Reduction, Environmental Justice, Hazardous Waste Site Remediation, and Land, Water, and Wildlife Protection. Of these five areas of work, I was able to participate in four.



The most impactful work I did this summer at Eastern Environmental Law Center involved drafting a motion to intervene for an environmental justice matter. The matter involved residual contamination from a facility that operated and presided in Newark. The contaminated land was then developed into properties and as a result, the residents living in these properties have been exposed to harmful toxins. My involvement in this case was significant to me as I had set out on addressing environmental justice issues. I was able to speak with a resident directly impacted by the contamination and understand the impact it had on his life. To the extent that I was able to participate in this matter, I am grateful to be involved in redressing their concerns and ensuring the residents assert their rightful legal claims.

I have also worked on preventing the Southern Reliability Link (SRL) Pipeline from being constructed in New Jersey. The pipeline, currently under construction, would pose a threat to the New Jersey Pinelands National Reserve, a national reserve home to endangered wildlife and dozens of unique species. In the event of a pipeline break, the SRL Pipeline risks exposing the habitants of the Pinelands to contamination. As for the other matters, I was able to use my constitutional rights experience and knowledge to craft creative legal strategies to environmental issues. All in all, I am thankful for the funding I received which provided me with an invaluable opportunity to work at an organization that promotes sustainable alternatives to energy consumption and works to protect communities impacted by regional economic development activities.

**Riley Anderson**  
J.D. Candidate, 2021  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Dillsburg, PA  
Undergraduate Institution: Syracuse University

### **Child and Family Advocacy Clinic**

This summer I had the opportunity to work with the Children and Family Advocacy Clinic here at Rutgers Law – Camden, where I represented four clients in different legal matters under the supervision of Professor Meredith Schalick. This experience was crucial in showing me the personal side of the legal field that sometimes is lost in the reading and writing heavy 1L curriculum.



The most valuable part of this summer internship, and something Professor Schalick stressed from the beginning, was learning how to effectively work with and create a relationship with clients. Being able to learn early in my legal career how to explain legal doctrines and the process to those who don't interact with it every day was invaluable. Going forward, it is something I constantly reflect on when I learn new aspects of the law: "How would I explain that to a client?"

When I wasn't reaching out to clients or working on their cases, I conducted research regarding the reinstatement of parental rights. Being interested in family law, and specifically in adoption work, I knew there were a multitude of issues in the realm of foster care, and more specifically with many kids who age out of the "system". By researching statutes and current legislation, I was able to see a trend in which states are now, under specific circumstances and guidelines, allowing children or parents to petition courts and allow parental rights to be reinstated in situations where they have previously been terminated. Not only did completing this research allow me to learn something new, it also established to me that the law has the ability to create fixes and remedies in unexpected ways.

Although I spent most of my summer back at school, it never felt like it. Instead, it showed me a side of the law that I forgot along the way during 1L, and reinstated the fact that working with and assisting families was why I went to law school in the first place.



**Robert Andrade**

J.D. Candidate, 2020

Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: San Francisco, CA

Undergraduate Institution: University of California



**City Attorney's Office of San Francisco**

This past summer I had a wonderful experience working in California for the City Attorney's Office of San Francisco. At the City Attorney's Office, I was in the Labor & Employment Department where I researched and wrote numerous memos on employment-related issues that pertained to workplace discrimination, disability accommodations, whistleblower retaliation, adverse employment actions, labor contract disputes, collective bargaining agreements, and Medicare. Moreover, I had the opportunity to write a few motions for summary judgment and motions to dismiss, as I built more trust with the attorneys in the office.

In addition to my research and writing assignments, I was able to gain valuable experience in working with clients personally. For each week of my internship I made on-site visits to different City Agencies—Performing Arts, Police, SWAT, Fire, Parks & Recreation, Port, and Museum Departments—to understand the employment related issues that affected the different employees within each. Furthermore, I gained a lot of observational experience in assisting deputy city attorneys in taking and defending depositions, negotiating in mediations, and advocating for the City in arbitrations on employee terminations.

My time at the City Attorney's Office was incredibly wholesome, and I am truly grateful for receiving funding as a MAIDA Fellow. Having the opportunity to meet and talk to the employees that my memos and motions pertained to, the ability to visit the City Agencies in which all of the employment issues I handled arose from, the experience of being able to sit at the conference table and provide input and feedback to the office all helped enhance my skills as a future attorney. I was able to cultivate my passion for wanting to pursue a legal career in Labor & Employment while at the City Attorney's Office. Without having funding for this summer, I would not have been able to have taken full advantage of my summer internship and my time in San Francisco, California.

**Amir Botros**

J.D. Candidate, 2021

Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: New Milford, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: Montclair State University

**Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)**

It is often an impossible task to describe meaningful experiences with mere descriptive words. I will describe my experience as a Maida Fellow at KIND with a real story from my work this summer to ensure that I am conveying the meaning and the impact of my experience. This story will be minorly distorted for confidentiality purposes.



KIND provides legal assistance to immigrant children who came to this country seeking safety and freedom. Those children are, in most cases, facing removal procedures. One of our clients was John (a pseudonym). John was born in a religious family that taught him that his faith is of paramount importance in life. He was a good kid, obedient to his parents, admired by his teachers for his good behavior and high intelligence, and loved by his peers for his courtesy, respect, and friendship. He was a child that adults thought had a great future ahead of him. However, as he began reaching adolescence, gangs were alerted to his good behavior and wanted to corrupt him by recruiting him to sell drugs and do other criminal activities. They were relentless. They stalked him after school. They watched his house. They approached him multiple times because he was the good religious kid and recruiting him is a symbolic victory over a way of life they refused to live. Their efforts culminated in an incident where they beat him to unconsciousness in front of his house. John came to the United States seeking safety and religious freedom. He was stuck in a bureaucratic limbo for multiple years until he finally received his legal status last summer.

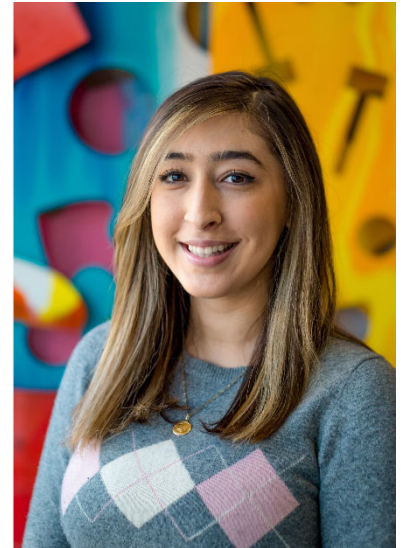
I was present during the hearing and at the time he learned about receiving his legal status. As we congratulated him, I got a chance to speak to him personally. I revealed to him that I received my legal status, also as an immigrant seeking safety and religious freedom, at exactly his age, at the same time of the day, in the same building. John is one of hundreds of kids we helped last summer. Thank you for allowing me to help these children build a better future for themselves.

**Soundous Bouchouar**  
J.D. Candidate, 2020  
Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Atlantic City, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: Rutgers University

**Immigrant Rights Clinic’s Immigrant Legal Services & Policy Project**

This summer I had the pleasure of interning at the Immigrant Rights Clinic’s Immigrant Legal Services & Policy Project. During my 10-week internship, I was closely supervised by Samantha Rumsey, a staff attorney for the clinic. I received detailed feedback on all my assignments and was lucky to have someone answer any and all of my questions throughout my internship.



The skills I gained from this internship are invaluable. In contrast to my other internships, here, I was able to work one-on-one with clients. There was one client in particular I got to work with closely in preparing their asylum application. While preparing this application, I learned a lot about the difficulties individuals face when applying for asylum. There are so many supporting documents and supporting affidavits that are necessary to make a strong case. It’s often difficult for clients to get in contact with family or friends from other countries and it can also be tough to get documents that are in one’s home country.

This internship not only provided me with skills that will help me in my legal career, but it has also provided me with great insight. The current presidential administration has attacked immigrants’ rights and cut back tremendously on the number of asylum cases to be accepted in recent years. Working behind the scenes and getting to see the staff attorneys in our clinic put in all the hours to helping individuals obtain asylum has been inspiring.

**Arabelis Brito**

J.D. Candidate, 2020

Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Manhattan, NY

Undergraduate Institution: University at Albany (SUNY)

**The Vera Institute of Justice’s Guardianship Project (TGP)**

I was extremely excited when I was hired to work at The Vera Institute of Justice’s Guardianship Project (TGP) based in Brooklyn, NY.

TGP serves as court-appointed agency guardians to vulnerable and impoverished individuals from many walks of life; including the elderly, undocumented and disabled. I was drawn to TGP because of their holistic guardianship model. Project staff includes lawyers, social workers, and finance associates, who oversee an array of services and help clients remain independent and engaged in their communities. Many times, vulnerable populations don’t just require legal assistance but need help receiving access to government benefits, document translation, advice on finance management or simply knowing that there is someone in their corner. As a legal intern, I assisted staff attorneys with research projects and helped draft various Orders to Show Cause to establish Guardianship and OSC’s to sell real property and help relocate individuals to places more suited to meet their daily needs. The highlight of my internship was working closely with one of the attorneys on a case of possible misappropriation of funds by a family member of a TGP client.

The MAIDA funding I received enabled me to give 110% to my internship. Last summer I was balancing a full-time job for a Superior Court Judge and a weekend job to be able to support myself. Although the work experience I received at the trial level was extremely invaluable, working two jobs was nothing short of exhausting and I feel detracted from my intern experience.

All in all, my internship with TGP has further fueled the type of help I’d like to one day be able to provide as an attorney and I look forward to taking the skills I’ve developed this summer into my final year of law school.



**Edwin Casas Prieto**  
J.D. Candidate, 2021 |  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: South Hempstead, NY  
Undergraduate Institution: John Jay College of Criminal  
Justice

### **American Friends Service Committee**

My work at A.F.S.C this summer was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. Knowing that there are wonderful attorneys providing free legal services to the most vulnerable population and assisting them with dignity, professionalism and respect inspires and reassures my faith in human kindness and care for one another.

The supervising attorneys were incredible; they provided me with the knowledge, resources and guidance necessary to represent actual clients in immigration proceedings. I was able to interact directly with clients, completed the necessary immigration forms and applications, and took direct detailed depositions and translated them into English.

They also trusted me in creating legal memoranda, briefs, motions and detailed affidavits. Their feedback was prompt and clear, which resulted in confident writing and great quality of work.

The most rewarding part was when we received the news that a case in which I worked, had been granted asylum. This case in particular appeared to be incredibly difficult because the client had previously safely resettled in two different countries. Unfortunately, the client was still being persecuted and harassed, so he came to the U.S. with dreams of living his life free and in peace. Being able to contribute in making this person's dream a reality, boosted my passion for public service.

I am very thankful to the Maida's for their generous stipend; It allowed me to intern at this wonderful organization which has now opened its doors and given me the opportunity to keep volunteering throughout the school year. I became so enthralled in some of the cases that I cannot simply walk away until I see that those people receive the relief that the law dictates.

The work that A.F.S.C. does is noble and commendable. Mr. and Mrs. Maida should be proud because they are helping law students gain valuable legal experience, while also providing these types of organizations much needed support.



**Abigail Cook**

J.D. Candidate, 2020

Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Dunbarton, NH

Undergraduate Institution: Quinnipiac University

**ACLU PA, Philadelphia**

During the first day, I went to a protest to support reproductive rights. During the first week, I was doing factual investigation into unconstitutional procedures in bail hearings. And during the first month, I was writing memoranda about potential police misconduct. The work of the ACLU of Pennsylvania was the most powerful I've ever gotten the chance to be a part of and I got to do it by the side of truly brilliant attorneys.



The biggest benefit of my experience was taking part in the development of a constitutional case at each progress point. In one instance I got to take part in an intake, starting with some factual investigation and background research and ending with my presentation of the potential case to the entire legal team including the legal director. In this case, and weekly with other cases, I got to watch the process of choosing cases. It was like an amazing sneak peek into the hearts and great minds of the ACLU.

There were cases already in motion and I was able to do factual investigation. Often that included combing through dockets and responses from Right-to-Know requests. It was an excellent introduction to developing a case and forced me to better understand the law in order to guide my inquiries. I got to research and write legal arguments in a free speech appeal and improved my strategic appellate writing.

And finally, I got to see the finality of a case. I got to see multiple oral arguments and I got to be in the office when the court called to tell us that a case the ACLU had been litigating for four years had come out in our favor. I got to see these attorneys beam with pride at the monumental victory for individual rights that they achieved. And I knew at that moment that that was what I wanted to do too.

**Alecsandria Cook**  
J.D. Candidate, 2021  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Las Vegas, Nevada  
Undergraduate Institution: University of Nevada,  
Las Vegas

**Neighborhood Defender Service – Immigration  
Defense Practice**



This summer, I worked as a legal intern in the Immigration Defense Practice at the Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem. As an intern, I primarily worked on asylum cases. I drafted a prehearing brief for a mother and daughter seeking asylum because they fear the daughter will be forced to experience female genital mutilation at the hands of their own family members if they return to their home country of The Gambia. Another one of my responsibilities with the asylum cases was to provide country conditions research to support why our clients could not return to their country of origin. Another case I provided country conditions research was for a daughter who fears returning to her home country because she will likely be persecuted by the government. She believes that the government is likely to have kidnapped her father and fears her political connection will place a target on her back if she is removed from the U.S.

Not only was I able to work on asylum cases, I provided assistance with naturalization applications, a cancellation of removal case, voluntary departure, and a rare motion to non-legal motion to terminate removal proceedings based on the client's equities with her longstanding ties in the U.S. As a law student, I'm particularly interested in the intersection of immigration and criminal defense work and was able to provide clients with Padilla consultations—focusing on how to prevent deportation or inadmissibility when clients face criminal convictions. The highlight of my summer was speaking on the record for the first time, where I gave an opening statement and direct examination in New York City Immigration Court.

Before working at NDS, I had very little immigration experience. I'm grateful for my host organization teaching me so much and allowing me to dip my toes in many different areas of immigration, as well as criminal law. I'm also extremely thankful for being granted a summer stipend because, without the funding, the internship would have been an even more financial burden than it already was.

**Jo-Anna Daly**

J.D. Candidate, 2020

Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Northfield, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: Saint Joseph's University



**Philadelphia Public Defender's Office**

Because of my Maida summer stipend, I was able to spend my 2L summer interning at the Philadelphia Public Defender's Office. This was the most meaningful job I've ever had. In fact, I am still working there now as an extern because I loved the work so much. The internship started with 2 weeks of intense training, where we learned about different aspects of the criminal system, litigation process, and client-centered lawyering. Then, we rotated every week into different units in the office. I worked in the office's walk-in center where I conducted client interviews, I worked in preliminary arraignment court where I made bail arguments for folks who had just been arrested, I worked in the prison services unit where I visited clients in jail to discuss their cases. My favorite unit was the mental health unit. There, I sat in on involuntary admission hearings and was able to visit clients at the Norristown State Psychiatric Hospital. Interning at the Philadelphia Public Defender's Office solidified my goal of becoming a public defender and I recommend the internship to anyone interested in criminal defense.



**Juliana Davis**

J.D. Candidate, 2021

Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Sicklerville, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: Rowan University

**Atlantic County Prosecutor’s Office**

This summer I had the opportunity to intern at the Atlantic County Prosecutor’s Office in Mays Landing, New Jersey. I have always been interested in working in the criminal justice system, and I was given the chance to work alongside assistant prosecutors, fine tune my legal writing abilities, and gain a behind-the-scenes look into how courts make their decisions and the hard work from both the State and defense counsel. I assisted on several different types of cases such as gang criminality, strict liability for drug-induced death, and homicides. I conducted policy-based research for the County Prosecutor and Chief Assistant Prosecutor on whether gun safety should be taught in schools and formulated changes to working hours for detectives as it pertains to exhaustion and driving.



This internship shed light on what it takes to be an assistant prosecutor and the challenges defendants face when entering the system. We had the opportunity to visit the Atlantic County Justice Facility and the maximum-security state prison in Trenton. On these trips we observed living conditions, what is available to defendants behind bars, and how their lives are changed after being sentenced to prison.

Along with the legal internship experience, I was able to attend SWAT trainings in Atlantic County to prepare SWAT officers with realistic simulations such as an active shooter on a college campus or in a high school. These were especially interesting as we had the chance to interact with law enforcement from the County and learn about issues their town faces in regard to criminal justice. In addition, the office participated in community walks with law enforcement as a way of community policing and sharing a positive experience for residents of Atlantic County.

The internship culminated in a mock trial where the interns took a real ACPO case and litigated it in front of a former Superior Court judge. I was able to present the opening for the State as well as a cross-examination of a witness.

**Derek Demeri**

J.D. Candidate, 2020

Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Hawthorne, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: Rutgers University

**Los Angeles County Public Defender’s Office**



This summer, I had the honor of clerking for the nation’s largest and oldest public defender office—the Law Offices of Los Angeles County Public Defender. The Office was first established in 1914 thanks to the work of Clara Shortridge Foltz, the first woman to practice law on the West Coast, and was the first public defender office in the world. Today, the Office has thirty-six locations around Los Angeles County and employs over 700 attorneys, not including its paralegals, investigators, psychiatric social workers, and administrative/support staff.

The skills I’ve earned while clerking with the Public Defender’s Office will stay with me the rest of my career. Some days I would sit in a holding cell interviewing clients for arraignment court. Other days I would spend deep in legal research looking up obscure points of law and drafting motions such as a 995 (Motion to Dismiss) or a 236.14 (Petition for Vacatur Relief Based on Human Trafficking Status). Within my first month, I was sitting second chair for a felony charge that ended up pleading out the first day of trial. My favorite moments, however, was when I was strategizing with attorneys on how to best advance the rights of our clients inside, and out of, the courtroom.

One of the most common questions people ask me when discussing my summer job is “How can you defend someone who has committed such heinous crimes?” It’s a question that most defenders have heard, but something that misses the mark. When I work to support the public defenders, my responsibility is to ensure that our client’s constitutional rights are protected. No criminal charge, no matter how “heinous,” is so powerful that it overrides the rights that are inherent to members of our society. Importantly, it is the state’s burden to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the charged is guilty as accused. If the prosecution is unable to prove these charges, then fairness requires that the defendant no longer be held to answer for them. When I do answer that inevitable question, I am proud to say I am fulfilling my civic duty.

With each new experience, I continue to fight for the advancement of rights of those most marginalized in our society. The ability to wield the power of the law is a privilege and something I look forward to using for others. Until then, I maintain a commitment to learning, growing, and positively influencing my surroundings.

**Samantha DiTroia**  
J.D. Candidate, 2020  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Marmora, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: Saint Joseph's University



### **Coalition Against Rape and Abuse (CARA)**

This summer I interned with the staff attorney at the Coalition Against Rape and Abuse (CARA). The Coalition Against Rape and Abuse is an organization that provides counseling services, legal services, safe housing, and food to victims of domestic violence in Cape May County. All services provided by CARA are free and confidential. CARA has one staff attorney who represents clients in Final Restraining Order hearings, as well as divorce and custody proceedings. The staff attorney will often meet with anyone who contacts her asking about CARA's legal services, however, she is tasked with choosing which cases to take as resources are limited.

In Cape May County, Final Restraining Order hearings are only held one day a week. Often, clients would contact the staff attorney just a day or two before their court date. The staff attorney and I routinely interviewed clients, chose which cases to take, and often had little time to prepare for the hearings. Immediately after interviewing a client and agreeing to represent the client, I would prepare a document outlining the questions that the staff attorney would ask the client during the hearing. After preparing this document, the staff attorney and I would sit down and discuss what would work, what wouldn't work, and how to make it stronger. Each morning before court, I would meet with our clients and explain to them what would happen in the court room and prepare them for the hearing.

Additionally, I conducted (and am still currently conducting) multiple research projects. Further, I prepared a proposal that could help CARA and the courts work together to better prepare pro se plaintiffs seeking Final Restraining Orders. This proposal would allow representatives of the law project at CARA to identify and speak to pro se plaintiffs before the start of court in order to give them a brief explanation of court procedures, evidence that is permitted, etc.

I am grateful to the Maida family for this valuable experience.

**Margaret Fiori**  
J.D. Candidate, 2021  
Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Newark, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: Skidmore  
College

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



This summer I focused on legal research and writing for the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice (“the Institute”). I worked under three distinct pillars of the organization: (1) for the Economic Mobility Pillar, I conducted a 50-state survey of land banks in preparation for the Newark roll-out of its land banking initiative; and I wrote a memo on the history of slavery and economic development during the colonial period in New Jersey; (2) for the Civic Engagement Pillar, I made requests via the Open Public Records Act (“OPRA”) regarding the documentation of race and ethnicity, specifically around the Latinx population, to various level of the justice system (police precincts for arrest data, courts for conviction and parole data, the Department of Corrections for incarceration data, and the Office of Probation for probation data); the goal was to find an accurate count of disenfranchised voters within the Latinx community; (3) for the Criminal Justice Reform Pillar, I read the bond document regarding the building of two new youth prisons in New Jersey, and wrote the argument section of a brief for the Institute to utilize as it fought against the construction.

The Institute was very welcoming from day one and was clearly invested in my understanding of all of the complex work they undertake. They assigned two “point-people” in addition to my project supervisors who were focused on my daily scheduling and supporting me in my workload. I learned a lot about what it is like to work at a policy institution and received helpful and supportive advice on legal research and writing skills, advocacy skills, and general career guidance.

**Caitlin Flynn**

J.D. Candidate, 2020

Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: West Deptford, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: American University

**New Jersey Attorney General - Division of Criminal Justice**



Working for the Attorney General Division of Criminal Justice allowed me a unique experience to see how the criminal justice system and courts vary from county to county. I began the summer assisting with preparing for a trial of a corrections officer. The trial was multifaceted, including working with co-conspirators in order to have them testify against the defendant. One of the main tasks I was assigned to was preparing motions for objections that we expected the defense to make, including objecting to the use of certain hearsay evidence. This was helpful in seeing how the attorneys prepared for trial and how they anticipated the defense's arguments. Throughout the trial, additional unforeseen objections arose, which required additional memos to be researched and written quickly. Having a strong research background from my previous coursework was invaluable in helping me complete these tasks.

Following the trial, I began working with the cyber unit, focusing specifically on crimes against children. It was surprising to see how closely the attorneys work with the detectives to build cases. From the investigations of individuals downloading and distributing child pornography to the dating app stings of adults soliciting minors, the attorneys were present each step of the way to understand the investigation and advise on next steps. These cases focused primarily on the pre-trial motions, including issues of Miranda, May Hearings, and suppression of evidence. When the Defendants were unsuccessful in these motions, they almost always would agree to take a plea. Working with this unit, really cemented the important work the state is doing to proactively protect children, and to prosecute those committing crimes against them.

**Mychal A. Giansanti**  
J.D. Candidate, 2020  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

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

### **New Jersey Federal Defender**



By pursuing a J.D. from Rutgers Law School, I envisioned I would have the ability and duty to advocate for marginalized individuals. This summer, I had the honor to advocate for those who could not afford private legal representation, as a Law Clerk for the Federal Public Defender’s Office in the District of New Jersey.

The Sixth Amendment to the United States Constitution grants accused individuals the right to representation in criminal prosecutions. The Criminal Justice Act (CJA), passed in 1964 and amended in 1970, enables the federal judicial districts to establish Federal Defender organizations to fulfill this Constitutional right. Federal Defender Offices are the institutional counterparts to U.S. Attorney’s Offices who prosecute federal crimes. The vast majority of people prosecuted in Federal court cannot afford the cost of representation. There is no criminal charge that overrides a person’s Constitutional right to legal representation. Clerking at the Federal Defender’s Office was an opportunity to serve both the individual and the public, by ensuring our criminal justice system is operating fairly.

The majority of the Office’s work involves making sure our clients are fairly sentenced such that justly compensates victims, maximizes rehabilitation, and keeps our communities safe. To that end, defenders work with investigators and support personnel to develop a complete picture of the client, examining their full history and current circumstances. Sometimes employers or family members write letters explaining their relationship with the client and speaking to their character. This information is compiled in a sentencing memo, along with the attorney’s recommendation to the judge about what the client’s sentence should be, within the range of sentencing guidelines judges use.

Writing sentencing memos for judges really drove home that clients are individual people with strengths and weaknesses, carrying trauma and triumphs, navigating life just like the rest of us. They have a Constitutional right to have their story heard, as judges can (and do) take facts separate from the charged crime into account at sentencing. I saw that many of our clients had childhood trauma, and could likely have benefited from advocacy in their past. This is one reason why I will be representing children in child abuse and neglect cases next semester in the Child and Family Advocacy Clinic at Rutgers; the legal system can be a tool to provide necessary services to those in need.

I observed clients who took charge of their lives by successfully “reentering” society after incarceration through the NJ Federal Prisoner Reentry Program. Each week, Prosecutors, Defenders, Parole Officers, client family members, and support staff met with specially selected participants in order to facilitate their successful transition to living in the community by removing or reducing barriers to securing stable housing, supporting their families,

completing educational goals, and finding jobs. I highly value the unique experience of watching everyone working towards the common goal of supporting formerly incarcerated individuals and their communities, which is rare in our adversarial legal system. I was lucky to attend the graduation of a participant who had successfully completed 52 weeks of demanding program requirements. Although this client was no longer mandated to attend Reentry Court meetings, he enthusiastically said that he would keep attending nonetheless, because the support had been so helpful.

This mix of social work and law was what I envisioned when coming to law school. While earning my undergraduate degree in Developmental Psychology, I volunteered as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for abused and neglected children in the Burlington County Family Court system. In this position, too, I saw the judge and attorneys on both sides trying to work together for the best interests of children. My role was to gather information about the child's circumstances and needs, document and present them to the court, ensure that appropriate services were ordered, and explain the results of the proceeding to the child. CASA prepared me for reading Pre Sentencing Reports and advocating for clients' needs this summer. Rutgers Law prepared me for researching and writing about obscure points of law and communicating case strategies with other attorneys

I loved that my internship provided me a wide range of experiences that will serve me well in my legal career. I was not chained to a desk doing legal research (although I did get phenomenal research experience under the guidance of research and writing attorneys). Instead, I observed Federal criminal trials (including a bank robbery and a police officer's prosecution for excessive force), sentencing hearings, hearings for violations of supervised release, met clients in state correctional facilities, toured a Federal Correctional Facility alongside interns from the US Attorney's Office and Federal Law Clerks, and watched our client's position argued before the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.

I deeply appreciate the Federal Judiciary in Camden, where judges, attorneys from both offices, and support staff have a passion for their work and facilitate a respectful and collegial environment. My commitment to public service has never been stronger. As a Social Justice Scholar at Rutgers Law entering my 3L year, I am excited to put the skills and knowledge I gained this summer to use through continued client advocacy.

**Diego Gonzalez**  
J.D. Candidate, 2020  
Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Valencia, Venezuela  
Undergraduate Institution: Rutgers University

### **Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)**

As a result of being chosen for the second time to be a Maida Summer Fellow, I can proudly say that I had an educational and fulfilling summer while interning for Kids in Need of Defense (KIND).



As a 2L intern, I was given the opportunity to work on several complex cases which involved aiding children in applying for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) in their respective family court, asylum within the Newark asylum office, and other forms of immigration relief in immigration courts or through USCIS. I drafted various briefs, declarations and other legal documents.

One case stands out to me the most: From my first day interning for KIND, I was entrusted with a client that missed several prior meetings and, because of those absences, KIND had not been able to gather sufficient information to follow up on any potential forms of immigration relief. Although it took weeks of calling the client to remind them of future meetings and explaining the importance of gaining legal status in this country, I was able to gain the child's trust and meet regularly. As a result of these meetings, I had enough information to then submit family court documents and start his process for SIJS.

In addition to the direct representation cases that I was assigned to, I also aided the office in other ways. During my internship, I interpreted at the asylum office on four separate occasions. I also translated birth certificates and other identity documents for our clients. By the end of the summer I had completed two other projects; I wrote a ten-page memo on how the material support bar had impacted cases related to children at immigration and circuit courts, and completed a chart explaining how to apply for a driver's license in both English and Spanish for KIND's clients.

Without the stipend afforded to me by the Maida Summer Fellowship, I would not have been able to work with immigrant children as an intern at KIND. Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity.

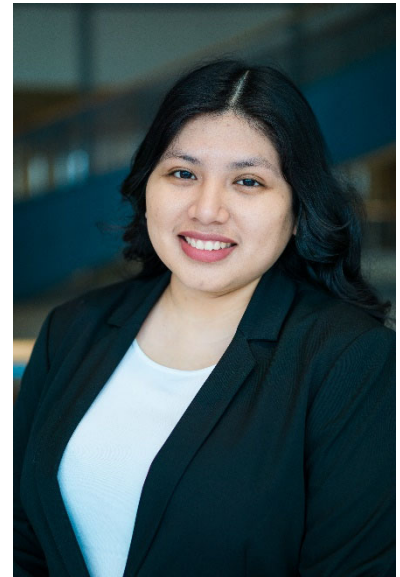


**Cindy Guaman**  
J.D. Candidate, 2021  
Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Newark, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: Rutgers University

### **Make the Road - NJ**

Interning with Make the Road - NJ has been the most rewarding experience of my law school career so far. Not only did I do legal work, but I was also able to see the organizing aspect of the organization. I was able to experience what community lawyering entails. I received an all-around educational experience and I could not be more grateful to receive funding to help me stay afloat while engaged in the non-profit sector of the law.



Make the Road – NJ advocates for the immigrant and working-class community of New Jersey. They also provide free legal assistance in immigration law to the community. I was able to take part in this work by providing free naturalization and DACA aid, conducting free consultations for the community, holding Know Your Rights trainings at membership meeting, and providing the organization with research that would advance the interests of the immigrant community.

Not only did I receive an ample amount of experience by working alongside experienced attorneys and organizers, but I also built a longstanding relationship with our team members and hope to nourish those relationships in the future. I was able to do the real life work that practicing attorney do and also conduct research that first-year attorneys do as well. I received well rounded experience at Make the Road New Jersey, and I know I will be working with them in the future through volunteer initiatives. Thank you to Maida Fellowship Program for helping me choose the right internship for me.

**Noel Hanrahan**

J.D. Candidate, 2020

Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Barrington, RI

Undergraduate Institution: Stanford University

Graduate Institution: Boston University



**Abolitionist Law Center**

On Tuesday October 26th 1982 at 11pm the Sweet Love Lounge, at 25th and Cambria in Philadelphia was robbed. Over seven to eight minutes not a shot was fired, no one was injured, and under \$1000 was stolen from the bar till and patrons.

Dennis “Solo” McKeithan was sentenced to 55-110 years for five counts of robbery.

The kicker- Dennis wasn't even there.

Dennis McKeithan is currently incarcerated at SCI Brenner, PA. He is 64 years old and has been imprisoned for 37 years for this single robbery. McKeithan will be parole eligible in 2037 when he is 81 yrs. old. The weight of the evidence has never been reexamined in any court. The record created in the Common Pleas Court, PCRA statutory procedural bars, and serial ineffective counsel have prevented relief.

Jean Wilson, the barmaid that night, Robin Fears, a patron, and Derrick Harold who plead guilty to the robbery all have come forward to state that Dennis did not rob the bar. Of seven eyewitnesses I have located four. Both Ms. Wilson and Mr. Harold will testify that they were pressured into naming Mr. McKeithan by police.

I have also uncovered extensive police corruption regarding numbers payoffs that implicates specific officers from the 39th district and provides a corrupt motivation for their actions in this specific case. During the week of September 23rd 2019 I will be meeting with the Philadelphia DA’s Conviction Integrity Unit to negotiate access to police and prosecutorial files that will likely reveal additional “Brady” violations in the case.

**LaNee Isom**

J.D. Candidate, 2020

Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Willingboro, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: Rutgers University

**U.S. Attorney's Office**

During the summer of 2019, I spent my funded summer at the United States Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey in Camden, New Jersey. This experience was my first exposure to federal law enforcement, which reinforced my interest in criminal law and courtroom advocacy. While there I had the opportunity to observe a variety of federal court proceedings, research both civil and criminal issues, and visit a federal prison.



One of the cases that I observed trial for was about a police officer accused of brutalizing an individual from the community while on a call. During the trial preparation, I had the opportunity to accompany the two Assistant United States Attorneys (AUSAs) who were prosecuting the case to inspect the scene of the incident. Prior to visiting the scene, which is outside of a public retail establishment, we viewed security camera footage and police body worn camera footage of the incident. The establishment was also adjacent to a residential area and while we were there, the AUSAs spoke with the owner of the house directly across the street from the establishment, who was home at the time and witnessed the incident. This experience taught me much about the importance of thoroughly inspecting and evaluating all available evidence when planning a trial strategy.

This summer experience taught me much about the significant impact that prosecutorial discretion has and the careful considerations that must be made when depriving someone of their liberty. This internship was another steppingstone on my path to a career in public interest and further solidified my goal of practicing criminal law as a trial advocate.

**Aryn Keyel**  
J.D. Candidate, 2021  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Bloomfield, NY  
Undergraduate Institution: Canisius College

### **ACLU - PA**



During the summer of 2019, I interned with the ACLU of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia office, through the Maida Partners Program. The program quite literally facilitated the fulfilment of one of my legal dreams while the stipend helped alleviate other concerns so I could concentrate exclusively on my work at the ACLU.

In just ten-short weeks, I gained incredible insight into the world of impact litigation and the kind of qualifications not articulated on a job posting. I witnessed a fraction of the immeasurable preparation oral arguments receive and was able to better conceptualize how to attain my own short-term and long-term goals. Every day I was fortunate to engage with strategic and creative legal thinkers—attorneys as well as my fellow interns—who continuously galvanized one another to be champions for justice. My small role conducting legal research and drafting memoranda, may not have initiated large-scale change for Pennsylvanians; however, personally this summer educated a sense of resilience and persistence I needed to uncover to be the most effective and dynamic advocate I can be.

Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Maida, for providing more than just a stipend; for students like me your contributions created the opportunity to find our place in the legal field and the confidence that we belong here.

**Megan Mallon**

J.D. Candidate, 2020

Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Belmar, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: Seton Hall University



**New Jersey Office of the Public Defender**

I was fortunate enough to be a recipient of the Maida Fellow funding. My summer internship was with the Office of the Public Defender, and I was located at headquarters in Trenton. My supervisor was the deputy of the Special Hearings Unit (SHU) and the ISP Unit. I was assigned as an intern for both units and got great experiences from both. The SHU team handles sex offenders who have classification and tier hearings. The ISP unit deals with clients all over the state of New Jersey who are currently in jail, and have applied for the ISP program. It is an intense supervision program which helps reduce the number of inmates in jails and help rehabilitate the clients.

Under SHU, my supervisor challenged me by assigning memos and motions, which were later filed with the court. Throughout the summer for this unit I was given five clients for which the assignments were to review the client's file, write a motion for that client and then represent them in court. These clients were either being classified or attempting to re-tier their classification. I was also given other research and writing projects that were in relation to the work I was doing with the SHU team.

Under the ISP unit, I visited clients in jail and represented them at their hearings. I went to five ISP hearings over the summer and many jail visits. I enjoyed the experience of visiting jails and learning about this program.

Both of the units I interned for taught me much about the criminal justice system, specifically sex offenders and the way to rehabilitate, and the overpopulation of jails and prisons. A policy very important to me is criminal justice reform, so this internship not only allowed me to expand on lawyer skills, but also personal interests. I could not have asked for a better internship. My supervisor was wonderful and has continued to be a mentor to me. Thank you for the funding.

**Victoria Manuel**

J.D. Candidate, 2020

Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Lafayette, Louisiana

Undergraduate Institution: Louisiana State University

**Volunteer Lawyers for Justice**

This summer, I had the privilege of interning at Volunteer Lawyers for Justice, a nonprofit organization in Newark, New Jersey that is dedicated to assisting indigent pro se litigants with legal advice so they may best be able to represent themselves in legal proceedings. During the past summer, I was assigned to the veterans and divorce sections, but I also assisted with the consumer law, tenancy, and the education law sections.

During the summer, I conducted legal research and prepared memos for staff attorneys for a variety of legal issues. I assisted with Volunteer Lawyers for Justice's legal clinics, where pro se litigants may come, listen to a seminar by a staff attorney pertaining to the area of law in controversy, and then meet individual with volunteer attorneys who will assess their situation and give them advice on how to proceed. I also performed client follow up interviews to assess how the effective the services rendered by Volunteer Lawyers for Justice was and how they could improve.

As an aspiring public interest lawyer, the main takeaway I wanted from the summer was client interaction and I received a lot of it. While I loved my first-year summer internship a lot and I received a lot of experience with legal writing, I did not get any interaction with clients. This summer's internship provided that for me and it was an invaluable experience for me. As I now enter my third year of law school, I now feel more prepared for the challenges and demands that a public interest lawyer must prepare for. It was definitely a reaffirmation that I want a career in public interest. The staff attorneys at Volunteer Lawyers for Justice have been great role models and I've learned much about the profession through their mentorship and advice.



**David Marx**

J.D. Candidate, 2021

Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Edgemont, NY

Undergraduate Institution: Yeshiva University

Graduate Institution: Hunter College

**Mississippi Center for Justice**

This summer I had the opportunity to intern at The Mississippi Center for Justice in Biloxi Mississippi. It was important for me to step out of my comfort zone and to work in education law. As a former teacher in the NYC DOE it was my experience teaching elementary special education that impressed upon me that I could do more for my students and their families long term interests and goals as a lawyer. I did just that this summer.

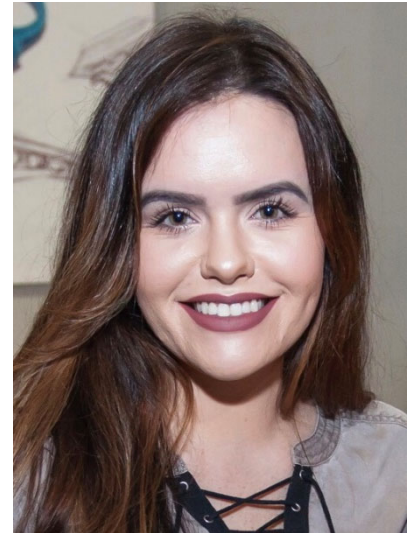


I worked on four separate projects this summer. The first project was writing a complaint against a school district for drafting an anti-bullying policy that did not align to the state statute. It penalized students who attempted to defend themselves. The second project was also a complaint against Child Protective Services for its policy of not investigating abuses by public employees. The third project I worked on was a grant proposal on the disproportionate corporal punishment that children of color are subjected to. My last project addressed corporal punishment directed at students with disabilities. Besides for the opportunity to work in an area of the law that I am passionate about, interning in Mississippi broadened my perspective of the magnitude of educational inequity across the country and the urgency with which these issues need to be addressed. It also brought me out of my white, privileged, insular world and showed me what real poverty looks like. Interning at MCJ had an indelible impact on me, the way I think, and my mission as a lawyer and advocate.

**Morgan McGoughran**  
J.D. Candidate, 2020  
Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Ocean Township, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: Marymount Manhattan College

**Rutgers Law School – Newark Clinic – Human Rights Clinic**



Over the summer, the Maida Fellowship allowed me to focus completely on my work in the International Human Rights Clinic at Rutgers Newark. My work over the summer spanned a range of topics, including human trafficking, immigration and political asylum, campus sexual assault, and sexual assault and harassment in general. I worked on two larger projects that I think should be highlighted.

During the two semesters of my 2L year and this past summer, the clinic has worked on behalf of a client who continues to seek political asylum as he was a journalist in Mexico who was targeted for speaking out against corruption in the Mexican government. We filed a brief with new evidence on behalf of our client in November of 2018 that was ultimately denied by the IJ Judge. Over the summer, I worked to prepare an appeal for the IJ’s denial on the basis of bias by the IJ Judge and a disregard of the evidence. Given that this case has been going on for over a decade, the record is extensive and the preparation time for appeal is longer than normal. We are going to be filing this appeal before the end of this year.

Additionally, I spent a good deal of my time in the clinic last semester working on issues of Campus Sexual Assault in light of the Trump Administration and Secretary DeVos’s proposed changes to the Title IX protections. Over the summer, I researched, drafted, and finalized proposed legislation and recommendations that New Jersey could adopt in order to safeguard student’s protections in schools. Over the summer, we contacted and met with advocates who work on sexual assault and women’s rights. The Clinic’s work on gender issues and sexual assault has transitioned into a partnership with the NJ Attorney General’s Division of Civil Rights to create a report on sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace, housing, and places of public accommodation this semester.



**John McHenry**  
J.D. Candidate, 2020  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Marlton, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: University of Florida

### **New Jersey Office of the Public Defender**

As a Summer Intern with the New Jersey Office of the Public Defender: Mercer Region, I was a “Practicing Law Student.” In general, most summer interns are not given the opportunity to work with real clients and take an active role in the client’s legal advocacy. The New Jersey Office of the Public Defender provided me with invaluable practical experience. Interning with the office was an opportunity to gain the practical experience only available to third-year associates at other firms. I was treated as an independent practicing attorney. I enjoyed representing pretrial detainees via a video feed from the local jail. I recognized the unique privilege of speaking with Superior Court Judges daily and getting to observe Judges work through issues in chambers.



My positive experience at the New Jersey Office of the Public Defender was not limited to the courthouse and the office. I was invited to the various social events. For example, I ran a 5k with attorneys from the office in Liberty City. My positive experience as an intern at the office showed me that the legal profession did not require a grueling eighty-hour week every week. During the School year, I worked as a law clerk at a private firm. Juxtaposing these two very different work environments was pivotal in steering me toward a career path in public service.

As a JD/MBA student and veteran, my original plan was to pursue a position with a corporate litigation firm, feeling that my public service was completed. However, the experience I had this summer forced me to rethink my priorities. The internship showed me that there were lawyers who enjoyed a real balance between work and life. It is no stretch to say that without the Maida Public Interest Fellows Program, I would not have been able to choose an unpaid internship. I am truly grateful to have been selected for the program. I wholeheartedly thank those responsible for the Maida Public Interest Summer Fellows Program. As a single father who spent the last four years as a JD/MBA candidate, I have to consider the financial ramification of my decisions. As a Maida Public Interest Summer Fellow, I was able to choose the position for which I was passionate and not the position that paid me the most. It was the Maida Summer Fellows Program that reinvigorated my passion for public service. Again, I express my gratitude for the privilege of receiving the Maida Public Interest Summer Fellow Stipend.

**Kelly McNaughton**  
J.D. Candidate, 2021  
Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: New Milford, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: Rutgers University

### **Partners for Women & Justice (PFWJ)**

This summer, I interned at Partners for Women and Justice (PFWJ). I was able to get amazing experience doing legal writing and research and working with clients. PFWJ works representing survivors of domestic violence in their final restraining order hearings (FRO). During my summer, I had the opportunity to observe several FRO hearings and help the staff attorneys prepare for them. A big part of our process was doing client intakes to determine what services we will offer clients, and I was able to be a part of it. I interviewed potential clients, asked them questions about their situation and helped determine more about what level of service we could provide for our clients. Then I would make a recommendation to the senior staff attorney as to what level of services we will provide, meaning whether to give the case to a pro-bono attorney or whether the organization would take the case itself.



Also, I had the opportunity to write three briefs on different evidentiary issues. One brief had to do with admitting police body camera footage into evidence. In domestic violence cases, sometimes body camera footage is the best evidence that can be obtained showing plaintiff's injuries, so getting that footage authenticated and admitted becomes imperative. Another brief I wrote had to do with the admissibility of certified medical records, which are another critical piece of evidence in domestic violence cases. I feel as though I was able to make an impact on the organization and in the lives of the clients I was working with.

I was also given the unique opportunity of attending a training on the Sexual Assault Survivors Protection Act (SASPA), which inspired me to write my journal note on the implications of the statute. Another great opportunity for me was being able to attend the New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence's conference, which provided me with an education regarding the current issues in the field. The summer was very impactful and inspiring. Working with such committed attorneys allowed me to see how passion can fit into the law and how we can all do our part to use our legal degrees to change the lives of others. I hope that in my future career I can always return to PFWJ, as a pro bono attorney and take on cases when I can.

**Jennifer Monge**  
J.D. Candidate, 2021  
Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Queens, NY  
Undergraduate Institution: Williams College

### **ACLU-NJ**

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Maida family for this opportunity. My reason for attending Rutgers was to pursue public interest work and this fellowship provided me the financial security to dedicate my summer to doing so.



My summer fellowship with the ACLU-NJ has proven to be pivotal in this stage of my legal career. I can definitively say that public interest and, specifically, civil rights work, is the field I want to pursue when I graduate. This realization came about through my interaction with the brilliant and stalwart advocates at the ACLU-NJ. From my first day, I was assigned to work alongside a senior supervising attorney on a first amendment case in Municipal court. The attorney, Alexander Shalom, was previously a public defender in Essex County, with over half a decade of defending citizens against serious criminal charges. I was instantly impressed with the ease with which he precisely dissected for me the critical and outcome determinative facts of our first amendment case, so I could do my research. From that moment, I knew that even if I did not necessarily understand everything about an issue, I was supported by a staff that took the time to teach me.

It was in this supportive environment that I also was brought onto a case where a transwoman was being housed in a male facility. The ACLU-NJ (through the work of staff attorney, Tess Borden and the ACLU-NJ Legal Director, Jeanne LoCicero), successfully spearheaded the first case in New Jersey's history that identified detention in the incorrect gendered facility as violative of the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination and the state constitution. Being able to work on the parole appeal and meet with this client was an honor because I knew that my tiny contribution was paving the way for this woman and other transgender individuals to be treated with the dignity they deserve.

This work was especially poignant in the wake of the passage of the ACLU-NJ sponsored bill restricting solitary confinement that, at the moment, is the most progressive law limiting solitary confinement in the country. I was present for the committee hearings and senate vote and it was stirring to be in the same room with survivors of solitary confinement when this bill passed. They were so thankful for the ACLU-NJ for advocating for this issue that I knew I wanted to emulate these attorneys. I learned that their brilliance and tenacity is a result of their passion for this line of work. They tackle every issue and case like it is their own because it is someone's, and therefore everyone's, human rights on the line. I hope that after law school, thanks to this experience, I can become a similar advocate and embody the spirit of Rutgers as the "People's Electric Law School."

**Natima Neily**  
J.D. Candidate, 2021  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Santa Cruz, California  
Undergraduate Institution: Arizona State University

### **Philadelphia VIP**



As a bilingual law student, I wanted a summer internship that would allow me to work with people from both of my communities - Spanish and English speakers alike. However, I knew that organizations that worked within these communities were unlikely to have funded positions for summer interns. It was thanks to the Maida family that I was able to find a legal internship this summer that addressed the communities I feel closest too, and be able to support myself.

Philadelphia VIP is a matchmaker; it pairs low-income community members with private attorneys who want to use their experience and expertise to help their community by taking cases pro-bono. As the summer progressed, I was able to learn directly from my supervising attorneys on how best to address the legal needs of the Philadelphia community. I began researching affirmative defenses to debt collection practices, and was able to identify a potential defense for one of our clients.

No two days were ever the same, although there are some constants: calling clients, collecting information, and reaching out to local attorneys. Some days, a complicated probate case settles into a straightforward deed transfer; on another day, a deed transfer became an auto-accident torts defense case, based on the ever changing needs and lives of Philadelphia VIP clients. Some days, my phone calls to clients bear bad news, but more often than not I get to hear a whoop of happiness when I tell our clients that their case has been accepted.

I'm grateful that the Maida family supported my experience at Philadelphia VIP. More than anything, my summer internship reminded me that a career in the legal field is not a matter of this or that, but a question that asks us: how can we build bridges between our communities and our careers?

**Claire Newsome**

J.D. Candidate, 2020

Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Eastampton, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: Mount Holyoke College

**New York Attorney General's Office – Antitrust Division**

This summer I worked for the New York Attorney General's Office in the Antitrust Division. It was the perfect position for me, that allowed me to confirm my passion for antitrust. I received a wide range of opportunities from document review to legal research. The attorneys brought me into important cases, and I was able to work with antitrust experts to see what type of evidence spoke to an offense. I also had the opportunity to present research I did at Rutgers to the bureau. Further, I learned about the investigative side of antitrust, as well as its litigation side. What fascinated me most is that the attorneys in the bureau were their own cops. They were in charge of investigating potential violations, not just bring cases against offenders.



There were also amazing mentors at the Attorney General's Office. The attorneys there were always willing to help you with planning your future. Whether you just stopped by their offices or went out for coffee, they would help you figure out where in the field you belonged. Also, I was able to accompany a group of attorneys general from 12 different states and see them argue a case in federal court. I even had the opportunity to meet New York Attorney General Letitia James!

Finally, I made close friends in the bureau. The interns in the antitrust division went to lunch every day, which provided me an opportunity to learn what law school was like at different institutions. I also used my Maida stipend for housing, which allowed me to live in Harlem for the summer. It was the perfect New York experience. I lived in Harlem and worked in the Financial district and would explore Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Queens on the weekends! The Maida stipend helped so much.

**Jake Novelli**

J.D. Candidate, 2020  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Haddonfield, NJ  
Undergraduate Institution: University of Maryland

**New Jersey Office of the Public Defender  
– Camden County**



This past summer, I worked as a legal intern in the Office of the Public Defender (OPD) for Camden County, New Jersey. I secured the internship after meeting the Office’s Deputy during an On Campus Interview last fall. I was then invited back for a second interview at the office and offered the position at this second interview.

My time at the OPD spanned from May 20th through August 2nd. I mostly worked eight-hour work days, sometimes 8:30am-4:30pm, sometimes 9:00am-5:00pm. There were four other legal interns in our internship class, and each intern was assigned to a different pair of lawyers. I was assigned to the team of Diane Price and Timothy Dalton who appeared in front of Judge Charny, a new judge who joined the bench in April. I would often accompany Diane and Tim to court and simply observe their advocacy for clients during the various proceedings. Diane would also take me with her to interview clients before their arraignments or similar proceedings and later in the internship, she encouraged me to take the lead in speaking with clients.

Four or five weeks into the internship, the 3L interns (including myself) finally received the letters from the OPD headquarters authorizing us to appear on the record. As we had begrudgingly watched the Prosecutor’s Office interns speak before the court for several weeks prior, the OPD interns were all eager to get on the record. Speaking before a judge was at first very intimidating but grew easier the more I did it. For the most part, all of the judges I appeared before (four different judges if I recall correctly) were excited to hear from law students and very respectful. By the end of the internship, I had appeared before the court numerous times to enter guilty and not guilty pleas, argue motions, argue against detention at detention hearings, and make other procedural requests.

Though I spent some time in court, I probably spent the majority of my internship time writing briefs in support of various motions, including motions to dismiss indictments, motions to suppress evidence, Miranda motions, evidentiary motions, etc. This involved performing legal research and then writing persuasively. Some of the briefs I wrote were quite long, one being nearly 30 pages. The attorneys informed me that my briefs were well written and they were pleased with my work.

Overall, my experience at the OPD was both educational and enjoyable. All of the

office's attorneys welcomed us and treated us as if we were their peers. The interns had the privilege of eating lunch every day with the attorneys and hearing them speak candidly about their cases and work. My experience was so good that I plan to apply to work at the OPD after I complete my clerkship next year.

I am appreciative that I was able to receive funding to work at the OPD this past summer. I am very interested in becoming a public defender or a lawyer who works in an adjacent field, but one of my reservations is the lower pay compared to being an attorney in other types of law. The Maida funding enabled me to pursue my interests this summer and lightened my financial burden. Because of the Maida funding, I was able to survive financially while performing the work I wanted to do. Thank you!

**Conner Porterfield**

J.D. Candidate, 2021

Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Roanoke, VA

Undergraduate Institution: Penn State University

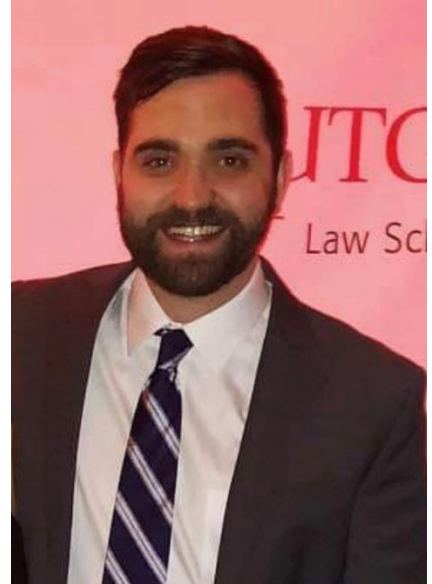
**Rutgers Law School - Camden Clinic – Child and Family Advocacy Expungement**

Interning as Professor Schalick’s research assistant was a fantastic summer experience. Although I only worked for the Expungement Project part-time, the assignments were uniquely rewarding and always kept me engaged. Splitting my time between working at the EDPA and the Rutgers Clinic offered vast exposure to different legal areas and made for a more rich and worthwhile summer. At the clinic, I was allowed to work with clients

and interact with them on a weekly basis. Whether it was face to face meetings, email correspondence, or just a quick phone call, the ability to experience real client interaction during my 1L summer is something I’m grateful for.

Going into the summer, I can admit that I had zero understanding of New Jersey’s expungement laws or anything related to the process. Considering my overall ignorance, I was nervous about the prospect of helping real clients on such serious matters. However, I am thankful for the excellent guidance of Professor Schalick, who helped me grapple with the history and current state of New Jersey’s expungement laws. With her assistance, I was brought up to speed on current affairs and put into a position where I could quickly begin assisting Rutgers’ clients. The experience of helping people try and better their lives was certainly fulfilling. With such a meaningful mission, each day spent at the clinic barely felt like work; it felt as though I was making a significant impact on people’s lives.

I can also confidently say that working at the Rutgers clinic helped further develop my legal research and writing abilities. Professor Schalick assigned me various memos which expanded my knowledge of juvenile brain development and state expungement laws. Additionally, she always made herself available for assistance and feedback on whatever writing assignments I submitted. Overall, my time spent working at the Rutgers Clinic was thoroughly enjoyable and I would highly recommend to any upcoming 1Ls.





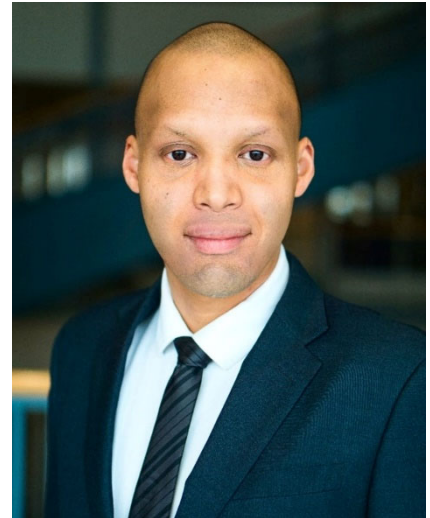
**Jaime Portillo**

J.D. Candidate, 2021

Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Los Angeles, CA

Undergraduate Institution: University of Southern California



**Community Health Law Project**

My time as a Maida Summer Fellow placed me at the Community Health Law Project in Bloomfield (CHLP), New Jersey, this past summer. I can honestly say that it was a privilege to work at the CHLP this past summer. In a nutshell, the CHLP works to help the disabled community in the greater New Jersey area, with several satellite offices throughout the New Jersey State. Their work encapsulates several areas of law relating to housing, child support, guardianships, and workers comp, among many others.

During my time at the CHLP, I was exposed to, and got to work with, a variety of practice areas. I was fortunate enough to be in an office with open communication among the lawyers and paralegals, whom were all willing and ready to help with whatever matters I had. I did a variety of tasks such as drafting memos and briefs, research relevant case law and statutes for client's issues, and even attend court for client's hearings. I enjoyed the practical nature of getting to produce tangible work that would benefit a client's matter, as well as the legal service aspect of the internship. I found it admirable that the work done in the office, regardless of the specific field, was to help low income disabled persons. I had the privilege of meeting several of these clients who had a variety of matters and came to the office for legal aid. I was lucky to have one of my classmates work alongside me, and I look back at the work I did for the CHLP with fondness and respect. Public interest has always been the focus of my legal aspirations, and this summer internship solidified that ideal for me. The funding I received from the Maida Fellowship helped me this summer and was truly a benefit to receive in my line of work. I hope to continue my ambitions of serving the public interest and give many thanks to the CHLP and to the Maida Fellowship for the opportunity.

**Salma Salloum**

J.D. Candidate, 2021

Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Clifton, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: Rutgers University

**American Friends Service Committee**

As an intern for the Immigrant Rights Program at the American Friends Service Committee, I gained experience in advocating for the rights of indigent immigrants detained by ICE. The complex criminal and immigration issues I researched, and the subsequent briefs I drafted, helped to broaden my appreciation for the value of advocacy through writing and the necessity for linguistic accuracy (in Arabic-English translation).



Thanks to the tremendously supportive supervision I received, and the well-conceived internship structure at AFSC, I was able to conduct case investigation, perform legal research and writing, and draft filings for court. Specifically, I drafted affidavits and briefs and researched prospects for crimmigration legal claims. I also had the opportunity to provide direct representation to a detainee during a bond hearing before the Elizabeth Immigration Court under the direction of a supervising attorney. I also coordinated bond payment and release for our client between the detention center and a bond-fund organization. Over the course of the summer, I translated documents from Arabic to English for asylum applicants' submission before the court, and I also translated Arabic/English between an Arabic-speaking detainee and AFSC attorney and interviewed his family and gathered evidence for his claim.

One of the most gratifying elements of the summer experience was being able to build trusting relationships with certain clients: because my supervisors gave me room to communicate with particular clients, I was able to establish a few relationships where the clients and their families felt comfortable providing sensitive information. One example is that I helped get contact information for letters of support from distant relatives who otherwise were reluctant to formally associate with the client's situation.

The Maida fellowship allowed me to fully commit to an area of law I would have otherwise not had the opportunity to explore. I am deeply grateful for the experience and cannot say enough how much it strengthened my resolve to work in the public interest sector. As a part-time evening student, it would not have been feasible for me to participate in a full-time internship without this funding. The fellowship supported my goals of gaining experience in meaningful advocacy while managing my commitments at home.

**Ryan Slocum**

J.D. Candidate, 2020

Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Hainesport, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: Rutgers University

**South Jersey Legal Services**

I spent my summer providing free legal service to my own clients assigned to me.

Primarily, my clients were tenants who were facing eviction, had a habitability issue, or were in danger of losing their Section 8 housing. For all clients, I would speak to them on the phone or interview them in person to provide legal advice on their issue. If I determined that the client had a meritorious defense, I could actually represent them and negotiate with the landlord's attorney at court.

I also had clients with debt collection matters where they were facing a wage garnishment or bank levy. I would interview the client via phone or in person to determine if they have any defenses. If they didn't, then I would contact the creditor's attorney to negotiate a settlement payment plan.

I had one landlord-tenant case that lasted the entire summer and ended with a settlement in my client's favor. The client was facing eviction after she signed a consent to eviction given to her by the landlord's attorney, but she was confused by the attorney and believed the document meant she could stay in her home. The client missed rent at the beginning of the year due to unemployment, but in May she started a new job so she was now able to keep up with rent. I did legal research, and found case law saying that a court could provide equitable relief to someone who signed a consent to eviction under a mistake or duress as long as it was equitable. To prove this relief was equitable for my client, I interviewed her further and discovered she was a member of the neighborhood watch, she was a friend of the mayor for her community service, she was the guardian of her granddaughter who was an honor student at the local high school, and she was now able to pay rent and had a daughter willing to co-sign that rent will be paid. I wrote a letter brief to the court the week before trial. I was prepared to appear in court to argue, but the day before trial, opposing counsel called and offered a settlement that the tenant could stay if she agreed to pay rent for next six months on time.

My experience with client interaction improved immensely this past summer, and I now understand landlord-tenant law as well as debt collection law.



**Jason Stump**  
J.D. Candidate, 2021  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Landenberg, PA  
Undergraduate Institution: West Chester University of PA

### **Community Legal Services**

During the summer of 2019, I was a legal intern at Community Legal Services of Philadelphia (CLS) in the SSI Unit, under the supervision of Jen Burdick. CLS provides free legal representation to low-income clients in the Philadelphia community. As a summer intern, I assisted my supervising attorney in representing disabled clients who had been denied SSI benefits from the Social Security Administration. I walked away at the end of my internship with improved skills in discovery of facts, legal research, writing pre-hearing statements and briefs, and direct questioning of clients. I even had the opportunity to write a pre-hearing statement that went before an Administrative Law Judge in an SSI hearing and the opportunity to direct question the client during the hearing.



None of this would have been possible had it not been for the Maida Fellowship. Having the chance to interview for a summer internship so early in the year was incredibly helpful. Knowing that I had secured a summer internship before the beginning of the second semester of my 1L year gave me the confidence and the security to focus on my studies without the distraction or stress of a job search. The monetary funding provided to me allowed me to pursue an internship I was truly interested in, instead of one that may have paid, but would not have been fulfilling. As an aspiring public interest attorney, there are often financial barriers to pursuing your passions. This summer, I did not have to take out another student loan, nor did I need to get a summer job to make ends meet. The Maida Program allowed me to maximize my time in an unpaid internship learning the skills that will make me a better public servant in the future. Thanks to the Maida Fellowship, the pursuit of my dreams was possible.

**Gerard Tyrrell**  
J.D. Candidate, 2021  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

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

**Rutgers Law School – Camden Clinic – Immigrant Justice**

During the summer of 2019, I used my part-time Maida Fellowship to intern with the Rutgers Law Clinic in Camden, New Jersey. Interning with the law clinic was eye opening in several different regards: it gave me a chance to learn a new area of law, it allowed me to practice real advocacy skills, and it gave me a chance to work on projects that were real and carried practical implications and responsibilities in a fluid environment.



My work at the Clinic mostly centered on the Immigrant Justice Clinic. I spent the first couple of days learning the basics of immigration, and especially asylum law. In hindsight, this proved to be an extremely valuable part of my internship. Despite never having studied or even looked at immigration law, I developed a working understanding of the basic law that I can take with me going forward. I find this especially valuable because, even though I may not work directly in immigration law when I graduate, I will be able to translate this knowledge into pro bono projects. Next, I was tasked with drafting a brief in support of an application for asylum. The applicant was a young man who experienced several traumas growing up. Learning the client's background made me want to be his advocate, and served as motivation to produce the best work product possible. It also served as a reminder that, even though the project was not entirely in my hands, the amount of effort I contributed could have very real consequences for a very real individual. This was heavily reinforced by the in-person meetings that I had with clients as well.

Lastly, the experience taught me that working in a real setting often involves unexpected challenges. As my brief was nearing its completion, my supervisor made me aware of an administrative decision, released that week, which had real implications on my brief. While terrifying at the moment, the decision was extremely valuable in teaching me how to adapt to changed circumstances and move forward for the benefit of the client.

I am so grateful for my Maida Fellowship experience, and am confident that I, as well as my future clients, will continue to benefit from it.

**Mario Valdivia**  
J.D. Candidate, 2021  
Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Los Angeles, CA  
Undergraduate Institution: University of California, Santa Cruz

**Wage and Justice Center and Los Angeles District Attorney's Office**



The question presented, facts, rule, legal analysis, and conclusion; this is the typical methodology that law students use to analyze and answer a set of operative facts in a law school exam. These fictional scenarios that law professors write are meant to gauge our knowledge of the law. During my first year in law school, this methodology of answering exams became a craft and a skill.

However, my thought process soon changed during my summer internship at the Wage Justice Center and the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office. The facts that I thought were abstract became more special and meaningful. The lives and journey of clients; their struggle to achieve a just and order society gave the files that I read daily, a heart, soul, and a pulse. The paper was breathing and eliciting an emotional response that I did not feel during my law school exams. Instead of analyzing and "going through the motions" I found myself advocating on behalf of these vulnerable individuals. When my supervising attorney assigned me to cases, I immersed myself into that subject matter, essentially becoming an expert in that field within the office. I experienced both joy and sorrow for these victims when the judge gave the verdict or when we received a letter addressing wage theft.

Individuals being deterred to file a wage claim because of financial hardships resonated with me the most. My personal and professional experiences with wage theft made me seek an avenue that addressed this issue at a macro level. Fortunately, I had the luxury and privilege of writing a whitepaper- that will be sent to the California legislature- addressing the tax increase on mechanic's lien.

I will forever be grateful for the Maida scholarship for supporting me in my initiatives. These internships have taught me what it truly means to be an advocate, how the law is used as a tool to give a voice to the voiceless, and that the law is not just a simple algorithm: a question presented, facts, legal analysis, and a conclusion.

**Micauri Vargas**

J.D. Candidate, 2020

Rutgers School of Law | Newark

Hometown: Harrison, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: New York University



**Community Health Law Project (CHLP)**

I learned so much at the Community Health Law Project (CHLP) in Elizabeth, New Jersey. During my first week, I attended my first two landlord-tenant cases, where I sat with two of the staff attorneys for their respective cases. I had many new opportunities to learn about different areas of law. For instance, not only did I have more exposure to landlord-tenant, but I have also learned more about guardianships, wills, trusts and POA's. I have also had a smattering of Social Security law. I was able to help two clients in non-legal ways. One client needed to get her utilities turned back on and another needed help getting access to his email accounts. Working with this population, people with disabilities has, taught me how to listen and pay close attention to unspoken communication as a lot of times this client base tends to distrust others or has a skewed perception of reality. I attended my first Social Security hearings with one of the Advocates at the Community Health Law Project (CHLP). I was happy to see that the ALJ for both of the hearings was a black woman, which made me feel hopeful that there are minorities making these very important decisions for vulnerable everyday people. At CHLP I got exposure to so many areas of law, in addition to health law. I was allowed to sit in hearings, settlement meetings, negotiations, for which I did research and wrote memos and briefs. It was a very rewarding experience, to say the least. During my last two weeks with CHLP, I attended a lot of court dates with several of the attorneys at the office.

**Destiney Wilson**

J.D. Candidate, 2021

Rutgers School of Law | Camden

Hometown: Pleasantville, NJ

Undergraduate Institution: Montclair State University

**NJ Office of the Law Guardian – Ewing and Hudson Counties**

This past summer I had the pleasure of interning in Ewing and Hudson County at the Office of the Law Guardian. I was able to see how Law Guardians advocate for children on the trial and appellate level. My favorite experience was visiting children with the law guardians and investigators. The relationships formed between the Law guardians and their child clients are sacred and necessary. Law Guardians are different from the DAG who represents the Child Welfare agency. The DAG advocates for the child's "best interest, whereas Law guardians present the child's "wishes to the court". They zealously advocate for the children in court and that's exactly what I want to do. Law Guardians are vital to a child having their voice heard on decisions that directly affect them.





# **2019 Maida Post- Graduate Public Interest Fellowship**

Dear James and Sharon Maida,

As a Maida Fellow, I worked from September 2018 to August 2019 at the New Jersey Office of the Public Defender in Essex County representing people sentenced to lengthy sentences as adolescents. In 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed mandatory life without parole sentences for juvenile offenders in Miller v. Alabama. In 2017, the New Jersey Supreme Court built on that victory and ruled in State v. Zuber that young people sentenced to “lengthy sentences” are entitled to a resentencing with the opportunity to present evidence of the “mitigating factors of youth.”

As a fellow, I used court data to help identify the 100+ incarcerated people throughout the state that could be entitled to legal relief. I also worked with ten client-partners who were waived to adult court as young people to tell their stories. One client-partner, “Ali,” has been incarcerated since 1986, when he was seventeen-years-old.

Ali was accused of being the “lookout” in a robbery-gone-wrong and was eventually convicted of felony murder and sentenced to a period of parole ineligibility of over 55 years.

Ali has been granted a re-sentencing and a special opportunity to re-tell the court his story. Today, Ali is a mentor in state prison. He has a greater understanding of the effects early lead poisoning had on his childhood, education, and development. Because Ali has lost his mother since being in state prison, it was important to use the principles of participatory defense to engage Ali’s larger community in his resentencing. I interviewed multiple extended family members and community members to prepare a re-sentencing video presentation. Ali and I also worked with local community members to develop a reentry plan. Additionally, I collected countless records from Ali’s childhood to show the court some of the difficulties he faced in childhood due to his disability and lead poisoning.

During the fellowship, I was also able to gain valuable trial experience. I represented adult clients in disorderly persons trials and suppression motions and assisted other attorneys in serious felony trials. I learned how to cross-examine witnesses, present strong opening/closing statements, and craft compelling trial themes. I am an infinitely more confident and capable attorney because of this experience.

Further, because of the generosity of the Maida family, I was able to work with client-partners on in-depth “client based storytelling” that would be extremely difficult for a traditional OPD trial attorney with large caseloads. I have also been able to use the same strategies and techniques to work with five young client-partners currently incarcerated in New Jersey’s youth prisons to challenge the court to modify their “dispositions” so they can return their families



based on their personal growth while incarcerated. These client-partners range in age from 15-22.

One of those young people, “Martin,” was incarcerated since the age of 14. He was adjudicated delinquent in juvenile court and given a ten-year term of incarceration for felony murder. The adult he was arrested with was sentenced to seven years and had already been released on parole. Martin, his family, and I worked together for months to gather letters of support and develop a reentry plan to present to the judge. Ultimately, at the end of my fellowship, Martin’s motion for recall was granted and he was able to move to his aunt’s home in North Carolina to pursue his goal of becoming a chef. If we had not opened this action in court, Martin most likely would have languished three more years in prison.

This work has been critical to develop the skill set to be a zealous advocate. I am proud of my successes at OPD and am excited to pursue a career using storytelling to challenge the criminal system’s treatment of unjustly targeted people. I am deeply grateful to the Maida family for your generous support during law school and at this early stage of my career.

Sincerely,

Tyler Dougherty, Esq.

## Patch

### **Play At Rutgers-Newark Examines Lives Of Minors In Jail**

Based on actual interviews, the play features stories of men who were sentenced to life in prison for crimes they committed as teenagers.

By Eric Kiefer, Patch Staff

Apr 1, 2019 7:00 am ET | Updated Apr 1, 2019 7:02 am ET

NEWARK, NJ — A documentary play that examines the lives of minors sentenced to life behind bars will be performed at Rutgers University-Newark at the Center for Law and Justice at 123 Washington Street on Wednesday, April 10 at 6 p.m.

According to a news release from event organizers, the play, "Life, Death, Life Again: Children Sentenced to Die in Prison," was written by Elizabeth Weill-Greenberg. Based on actual interviews, it features true stories of men who were sentenced to life in prison for crimes they committed as teenagers.

After the performance, there will be a panel discussion of the themes raised in the play – including forgiveness and how to create a more humane justice system. Participants include:



Photo by Dan Swern

- Huwe Burton, who recently was exonerated after being wrongfully convicted and sentenced a term of life imprisonment when he was 16 years old
- Tyler Dougherty '18, a Maida Fellow with the New Jersey Office of the Public Defender who represents clients sentenced as juveniles to life without parole terms
- Weill-Greenberg, the playwright
- Prof. Paul Boxer, Director of the Rutgers Center on Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice
- Dennis Porter, Founder and President of Prodigal Son's & Daughter's Prison Re-entry and Redirection Services
- Rutgers Law Professor Laura Cohen, Director of the Criminal and Youth Justice Clinic and co-director of the Center on Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice

Rutgers Law School Co-Dean David Lopez will give opening remarks at the event, organizers said.

"We are thrilled to bring this important work to Rutgers Law School," Cohen said. "In its insistence on giving voice not only to young people sentenced to life without parole but their families, victims, and advocates, it compels a multi-dimensional conversation about youth crime, sentencing, and redemption. We invite all members of the Rutgers and Newark communities to experience this moving piece of

theater and join in the conversation."

"It is so important to ensure that juvenile and criminal justice reform efforts include a detailed and nuanced understanding of the lived experiences of individuals who have been negatively impacted by the system," Boxer said. "I am very pleased that we are able to put on this play right in the heart of our training grounds for the next generation of justice professionals."

The play is produced by coLAB Arts and is being brought to Rutgers by the Rutgers Criminal Youth and Justice Clinic at Rutgers Law School and by the Rutgers Center on Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice. Co-sponsors include the Association of Latin American Law Students, Asian Pacific American Law Student Association, Race and the Law Review, Minority Law Students Association and Social Equity Committee.

The event, which will be held in the Baker Courtroom, is free to attend, but guests are asked to pre-register through this link.