THE MARY A. MCCARTHY MEMORIAL FUND
SUMMER PUBLIC INTEREST GRANTS

INTRODUCTION

Mary provided students with an example of a totally committed and unconflicted advocate. She taught her students to take their clients seriously, to listen respectfully to each client’s goals for the representation, and to do everything humanly possible to achieve those goals.

Miriam Berkman, former Associate Clinical Professor, Yale Law School

Mary Abigail McCarthy was a creative and dedicated public interest lawyer. She was a member of the clinical faculty at Yale Law School from 1982 until her death in 1990 at the age of 41. The Mary A. McCarthy Memorial Fund was established by Mary’s family and friends to honor her commitment to the legal representation of powerless people. The fund seeks to continue Mary’s work by providing financial support to law students who are equally committed to working in the public interest and who demonstrate the special respect and zeal for clients that characterized Mary’s professional career.

ELIGIBILITY

The McCarthy Fund annually provides grants to one or more Yale law students who wish to undertake public interest internships over the summer, but who are not eligible for SPIF (e.g., students who have already received SPIF for two summers). Currently-enrolled students who will be graduating in the Spring 2020 semester may not apply for the summer public interest grants; they may, however, apply for the Mary A. McCarthy Partial Postgraduate Fellowship.

Students may apply to support internships at any U.S. based non-profit organization or government office, provided that the organization does not pay other similarly situated interns. Judicial internships or internships for political campaigns are not eligible for McCarthy support. Please see Norma D’Apolito, Public Interest Director, if you have any questions about whether a particular internship with an organization will qualify.

Emphasis will be given to internships in the areas of practice that especially interested Mary: mediation and the rights of women, immigrants, prisoners, and criminal defendants. Applications for other projects will also be accepted, however, in keeping with the conviction of those who knew Mary that her interests would have continued to expand. While the committee will consider all generally appropriate applications, it will favor projects emphasizing legal work in direct client-service settings.

The Mary A. McCarthy Summer Public Interest Grants are awarded in lieu of SPIF, not in addition to SPIF. Students eligible for SPIF, therefore, should not submit a separate application for a McCarthy grant. Only currently-enrolled students who are not eligible for SPIF can apply directly for funding through the McCarthy Fund.
The McCarthy grants, like SPIF, will be based on a stipend of $647.83 per week for up to 12 weeks, not to exceed a total of $7,750. The number of McCarthy grants will vary depending upon the amount of funds available, the number and timeliness of the applications, and the nature of the work. Funding is not guaranteed.

APPLICATION

To apply for a Mary A. McCarthy Memorial Fund grant, please submit the following:

1. The name and mission of the organization where the student will be working, including a statement of the community need that the organization serves;

2. A narrative description of the proposed internship, including a description of the supervision.

3. If the internship is to be undertaken during the summer for a period of less than 10 weeks, include a description of other summer employment and any anticipated income;

4. A resume;

5. The name and contact information for the person at the organization who will be supervising or working most directly with the applicant;

Please submit these materials by email to norma.dapolito@yale.edu with “Mary A. McCarthy Summer Public Interest Grants” in the subject line of the email by March 26, 2020. Please note that grant decisions are typically announced as late as April and that grants will likely not be available for distribution to recipients until at least July 1, 2020.

In a world that is far from perfect, where social and economic injustices are widely accepted, Mary served as a model for those who believe lawyers can help build a more just society. While her death reminds us of our own vulnerabilities, her life was a stunning example of how those could be transcended.

Theodore Hsien Wang ’90, San Francisco Lawyers Committee for Urban Affairs