

The Mary A. McCarthy Summer Public Interest Fellowship 2025

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.

The Mary A. McCarthy Memorial Fund annually awards a few fellowships to students who work over the summer in the public interest but who are ineligible for SPIF. While the committee will consider all generally appropriate applications, it will favor projects emphasizing legal work in direct service settings in the U.S. on behalf of the client communities that especially interested Mary: women, immigrants, prisoners, and criminal defendants.

The Mary McCarthy summer fellowships are awarded in lieu of Summer Public Interest Fellowship Aid (SPIF), not in addition to SPIF. Students eligible for SPIF, therefore, should not apply for the Mary McCarthy grant. Currently enrolled students who are not eligible for SPIF (e.g., students who have already received SPIF for two summers) are eligible to apply directly to the Mary McCarthy Fund for support, provided that their host organization does not pay other similarly situated summer interns and has signed [YLS' non-discrimination statement](#).

Please note that this is a limited fund and there is no guarantee that every applicant will receive an award. The number of awards and the amount of each award will be determined based on the number of applications and the amount of revenue available in a given year. McCarthy fellowship awards will not exceed the amount paid by SPIF. The SPIF program's exclusion of certain categories of summer internships, such as judicial internships or political campaigns, also applies to Mary McCarthy funding.

To apply for a Mary A. McCarthy Memorial Fund summer fellowship, please complete this [form](#).

The application period closes on March 31, 2025. Later applications may be accepted if funds remain for summer internships. Questions can be directed to [Norma D'Apolito](#) or [Mary Korey](#).

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