THE MARY A. MCCARTHY MEMORIAL FUND
FOR PUBLIC INTEREST LAW AT YALE LAW SCHOOL

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.

The Mary A. McCarthy Memorial Fund annually awards one or more grants to Yale law students (including graduating third-year students) who wish to undertake significant public interest projects in the summer or following graduation. Emphasis will be given to projects 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 welcomed, 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 in the United States.

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

APPLICATION AND ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

The Mary A. McCarthy Memorial Fund 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 grant. Currently-enrolled students who are not eligible for SPIF (e.g., students who have already received SPIF for two summers) can apply directly for funding through the Mary A. McCarthy Memorial Fund. Currently-enrolled students who will be graduating in the Spring 2018 semester may apply for funding for projects to be undertaken within the year following graduation. Please
note that the SPIF program’s exclusion of certain categories of summer internships also applies to Mary McCarthy funding.

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

1. A narrative description of the proposed project, including an explanation of the community need the project is intended to serve;

2. A proposed budget;

3. A statement of other resources that may be available to the applicant to supplement the fellowship funds;

4. If the proposed project 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;

5. If the proposed project is to be undertaken for a period of more than 4 months, exceeding the length of a typical summer fellowship, then include a letter of recommendation from the sponsoring/hosting organization discussing the feasibility of the proposed project's scope and the professional supervision available to the applicant; if the proposed project is independent of a sponsoring/hosting organization, then a letter of recommendation from a professor or other professional reference familiar with the applicant's proposed project should be included;

6. A resume;

7. The contact information for the person at the organization who will be supervising or working most directly with the applicant (full name and title, name and address of organization, telephone, and email address);

8. The contact information for two references from professors or former employers (full name and title, name and address of employer/organization, telephone, and email address)

Please submit these materials by email to norma.dapolito@yale.edu with “Mary A. McCarthy Memorial Fund” in the subject line of the email. Applications for those graduating May 2018 are being accepted on a rolling basis. Questions may be directed to Norma D’Apolito or Juliann Davis.

Grants awarded for summer public interest work will not exceed the amount paid by SPIF. More generally, the grants may vary in size from $500 to $10,000, depending upon the number and relative suitability of the proposals received. In certain circumstances, the Mary A. McCarthy Memorial Fund may be awarded as one of several sources to jointly support major initiatives.

Please note that grant decisions are typically announced in April and that grants will likely not be available for distribution to recipients until at least July 1, 2018.

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