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

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 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, in keeping with the conviction of those who knew Mary best, understanding that the scope of 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

The Mary McCarthy Fund provides bridge fellowships to a limited number of graduating 3L who wish to work short-term in the public interest immediately after graduation and after taking a bar exam. It also provides funding to a small number of students doing public interest work for the summer.

Funding for Short-Term Postgraduate Public Interest Fellowships

The Mary McCarthy Fellowships are awarded to 3Ls for short-term public interest work immediately following graduation. The amounts of the grants vary in size up to $10,000, depending upon the number and duration of the projects as well as the relative suitability of the proposals received. Applicants requesting maximum funding are expected to work for approximately four months. There is a possibility, depending on the availability of resources, for
short extensions of the original fellowship. In certain circumstances, the Mary McCarthy Fellowship may be awarded as one of several sources to jointly support major initiatives.

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

1. Your name;
2. The name and a brief description of the organization where you will be working;
3. A description of the proposed project or position, including an explanation of the community need that the fellowship is intended to serve;
4. A proposed budget;
5. A statement of the duration of the fellowship;
6. A statement of any other resources that may be available to supplement the fellowship funds;
7. A letter of support from the sponsoring organization discussing the feasibility of the proposed project and the professional supervision available to the applicant;
8. A resume;
9. The name, title, and contact information for the person at the organization who will be supervising or working most directly with the applicant; and
10. The contact information for two references from professors and/or former employers.

Please submit these materials by email to Norma D’Apolito at norma.dapolito@yale.edu with “Mary McCarthy Memorial Fund” in the subject line of the email. The application period opens on February 15, 2019 and closes in March 28, 2019. Questions can be directed to Norma D’Apolito or Michael Werner at michael.werner@yale.edu.

*Please note that fellowship decisions are typically announced in April and that grants will likely not be available for distribution to recipients until at least July 1, 2019.

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