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 Summer Public Interest Internships

The Mary McCarthy summer grants 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.

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 needs of the fund.
Funding for Summer Public Interest Internships

number of applications and the amount of revenue available in a given year. 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 grant, please submit the following information:

1. Your name and class year;
2. The name and a brief description of the organization where you will be working;
3. A description of the legal work you expect to do over the summer;
4. The number of weeks you plan to work;
5. The name, title, and contact information for the person at the organization who will be supervising or working most directly with you;
6. If you are splitting your summer, please include a description of your other summer employment and any anticipated income; and
7. Please indicate whether you have confirmed with financial aid that you are not eligible for SPIF funding;

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.

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 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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