MARY A. MCCARTHY MEMORIAL FUND
SHORT-TERM PUBLIC INTEREST FELLOWSHIP

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 INFORMATION

The Mary A. McCarthy Memorial Fund annually awards a few grants to recent YLS graduates who wish to engage in unpaid public interest legal work for a limited period of time following graduation. Students who graduated after the fall semester this year or current students who will graduate June 2021 are eligible to apply.

Applicants may do work that is equivalent to that of a staff attorney in a public interest law office or undertake a public interest project of their own design. Emphasis will be given to work in the areas of practice that especially interested Mary, specifically the rights of women, immigrants, prisoners, and criminal defendants. In keeping with the conviction, held by those who knew Mary, that her interests would have continued to expand, applications for other projects will also be welcomed. While all appropriate applications will be considered, priority will be given to those emphasizing legal work in direct client service settings and those that impact underserved communities in the United States.

Depending on the length of the project as well as the number and relative suitability of the proposals received, fellowship stipends vary in size up to $12,000; fellows must commit to work a minimum of four months for a $12,000 stipend. Applications for periods under two months of work are less competitive. This is a limited fund and applicants are not guaranteed an award.

Yale Non-Discrimination Policy and Your Host Organization
Fellowship host organizations must certify that they are in compliance with Yale Law School’s Non-Discrimination Policy. For instructions on confirming an organization compliance, please click here.
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 INFORMATION

To apply for a Mary A. McCarthy Memorial short-term fellowship, please submit the following:

1. A personal statement describing your experiences with and commitment to public interest and your aspirations for future work as well as the ways in which the proposed fellowship fits with those goals;
2. The name and brief description of the organization where you will be working;
3. The duration of the fellowship;
4. A narrative description of the staff work or proposed project you will be doing, including an explanation of the community need that the fellowship is intended to serve;
5. A brief letter from the host organization discussing the staff work or proposed project and its importance as well as the professional supervision available to the applicant, including the name and contact information of the supervisor;
6. A resume and unofficial transcript;
7. The names and contact information of 2 references;
8. Applicants should describe any other source of income they expect to have during this period; they should also indicate whether they have accepted an offer of permanent employment, the name of the employer, and when they are scheduled to start that position.

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 will be accepted on a rolling basis starting Monday, March 22, 2021. Questions may be directed to Norma D’Apolito.