

OUTREACH 2016

Women's Law & Public Policy Fellowship Program
at Georgetown Law

SPRING SUMMER



Get Inspired!

Turn to page 8 to read the Fellows' reflections on their time with
Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg



The Women's Law & Public Policy Fellowship Program is deeply saddened to report the passing of Cassandra Q. Butts, who was a fellow in 1991-1992. I vividly remember Cassandra coming to speak to my fellowship class (1998-1999) about her work and taking advantage of the opportunities presented by the Fellowship Program. I was awed by her grace, confidence and composure. Her fellow-classmate, Holly Fechner, reflects on Cassandra.

A woman of style and grace with a deep well of compassion and a broad commitment to social justice passed on May 25, 2016. I am saddened to report that WLPPFP alumni Cassandra Butts died after a brief illness at age 50. A lover of jazz and basketball with wicked wit and a beautiful smile, Cassandra's presence and light will be missed by family and friends.

Cassandra contributed greatly to creating a better country and world through her work and by her personal example of achievement. After graduating from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1987 and Harvard Law School in 1991, she was selected for the 1991-92 fellowship program and worked at the National Health Law Project. She formed many friendships and connections that year and went on to serve the public in her impressive and varied career. She was an adviser to Senator Harris Wofford and House Democratic Leader Richard Gephardt, a counsel for

the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, a senior adviser at the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and Deputy White House Counsel to President Barack Obama. In each of these positions, she brought her considerable political skills to bear on solving challenges. In February 2014, the President, a friend from law school, nominated Cassandra to be Ambassador to the Bahamas and her nomination remained under consideration in the Senate at the time of her death.

Cassandra is survived by her mother Mae Karim, her father Charles Butts, and her sister Deidra Abbott. Her family learned after she died that Cassandra had acute leukemia. She will be missed deeply.

My experience at the Vagina Monologues

Maereg Alemayehu (LAWA 2015-2016)



I grew up in Ethiopia watching American movies and shows. This helped me to have a good understanding of American culture and I thought I knew what to expect when I was coming here. As a result, I didn't encounter any real culture shock until I attended the "Vagina Monologues." Georgetown Law students performed the play in February of 2016 in the Hart Auditorium. The shock for me started with the title. When I first saw the title "Vagina Monologues," I thought I read the title wrong. I couldn't understand why anybody would organize an event about vaginas, or what they would possibly talk about.

During the show, there were times I was very uncomfortable to the extent of wanting to flee out of the auditorium. To make things worse, there was a man in the play, who of course was also talking about the subject matter at hand! It really was an awkward situation for me, especially when he made particular sexual references. The final shock came when my

Professor and LAWA Program Director, Jill Morrison, with whom I attended the event loudly said the word "vagina" so many times when we were walking to dinner. Two things surprised me: first of all, when she was saying the word, it was as if she was saying any other word or any other part of the body, like arm or leg. The second thing was that nobody was surprised to hear her saying vagina out loud like that. She wasn't drawing any attention, but me I was praying for the earth to open and swallow me.

Speaking with my Professor about the history of the play, and reflecting on the experience afterwards really made me understand just how empowered women in the US are at this time in history. Such cultural expression that celebrates women is unimaginable for Ethiopian women. In addition to the cultural, this experience for the first time opened my eyes about the difference between US feminists and African feminists. In my opinion, the feminists in US are at the stage where they no longer have to prove the equality of women at a societal level. While some inequality certainly remains, US women have largely succeeded in changing their community's perception regarding the inherent equality of the sexes. The Vagina Monologues shows how US women are defying the wrong cultural practices that used to make women subordinate to men. Society used to shame them for having a vagina, now they are loudly appreciating having a vagina by talking about it on stage. The play also rallies against the various forms of abuse that

women experience, from street harassment to sexual assault. It was a powerful form of human rights activism, which I never would have guessed from the title.

To the contrary, African feminists are still at the stage of introducing the idea that says "women are humans with rights." The sad part is that cultural practices that perpetuate women's inferiority are still valued. Our societies are still fighting to preserve these cultural practices, at the expense of women. As a result, feminists who preach for women's equality are considered to be spoilers of culture and societal values. As a result, African feminists have their work cut for them to get where the western feminists are now. To tackle these challenges, we African feminists need to learn from western feminist's experiences. Of course we understand that social and cultural changes do not take place over night, but there are always lessons to be learned from our respective experiences.

This why scholarship programs such as LAWA are so important. These programs, in addition to opening the door to learn from western feminists, also expose us to how social change is reflected in different cultural experiences like the Vagina Monologues. This play forced me out of my comfort zone, and I know that it will help me to do better job in advancing women's equality on the Continent.



Clockwise from top left: The School of Foreign Service was delighted to welcome the LAWA Fellows to present their thesis topics; Fellow Dunia Tegegn enjoys celebrating with her parents, though she was sorely missed by her classmates over at the main LL.M. reception. Congratulations to Dunia on being the first LAWA to complete the National Security LL.M.; LAWA Fellows Pamela Lamunu, Elizabeth Makumbi, Anthonia Okolie, Maereg Alemayehu, and Funmi Adeniyi celebrate becoming Masters of Law. Not pictured: Dunia Tegegn, who was over at the National Security LL.M. reception; The Fellows enjoyed lunch with the always-inspiring Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton who shared her views on young women's activism, the civil rights movement and politics; The group awaits the arrival of the "Notorious RBG" in the uber-elegant Natalie Cornell Rehnquist Dining Room; WLPPFP Program Assistant Benedicta Darteh (left) was delighted to work with Alumna Gloria Ofori Boadu (LAWA 1995-1996) in Ghana over the Winter Break; Fellow Katie Filous (US 2015-2016) is working to advance the rights of women living with HIV at the International Community of Women Living with HIV.

Learning and Growing at a Service-Based Organization

Jasmine Phillips (US 2015-2016)

As the inaugural WLPPFP fellow at HIPS, a harm reduction agency serving persons impacted by drug use and sexual exchange, there are many challenges and many opportunities for growth. On my first day I was asked, “what do you want to work on?” Initially I was shocked and felt unprepared to give an answer. I assumed HIPS had concrete goals and knew what assignments I would take on. I assumed I would not be given a lot of responsibility and flexibility.

I was wrong. The first few weeks I did what seemed most natural to me as a recent law school graduate—I studied. I read blog posts, law review articles, statutes, and reports. I generated my own work plan and soon after, crafted the advocacy and policy agenda for HIPS. Prior to my fellowship, I did not know what a work plan was nor had I engaged with policy. Yet I was expected to build a policy department from scratch and afforded ownership over my work—an opportunity young attorneys seldom receive.

The autonomy allows me to leverage my background to advance the goals of HIPS as a community-based organization. While in law school, I centered the rights of criminalized and marginalized populations and continue to do so at HIPS. As a fellow, I help to promote the health and safety of our clients by confronting punitive laws and police practices through legislative advocacy, coalition building, and trainings. I also have the privilege of supervising staff and managing projects.



Of course, my experience has not been perfect. Being the sole attorney at a placement that primarily provides direct non-legal services often results in limited feedback and constant shifts in priorities. However, I have sought to overcome these obstacles by setting a clear agenda and collaborating with clients, advocates, and other policy organizations.

Because the question asked of me the first day is a reoccurring one, I no longer feel overwhelmed, nor do I question my capacity to think creatively and own my work. Through it all, I have gained new skills and developed a strong sense of discernment. The confidence instilled within me, as a WLPPFP fellow, will continue to shape how I view my skill set and approach my career.

Alumnae Spotlight

Fellowship Alumnae can be found serving their communities and the world. From implementing the Affordable Care Act, to seeking justice in the courts, to teaching the next generation of advocates, to serving as traditional rulers in their village, our Alumnae are making a difference locally, nationally, and internationally. Here are just a few highlights.

Carol Beier (US 1986-1987) was recently invited to membership in the American Law Institute and has accepted the position. Judge Beier is thrilled to continue her work with ALI, after spending several years as a member on the Board of Advisers on the Restatement of Indian Law.

WLPPFP congratulates **Kristie Bluett** (US 2014-2015) as she joins the Georgetown University Law Center's faculty as a Visiting Associate Professor in the Fall. She will teach International and Comparative Women's Human Rights, and will serve as the Acting Director of the International Women's Human Rights Clinic.

The Honorable **Dora C. Kanabahita By-amukama** (LAWA 1995-1996) is now serving as a Commissioner of the Commission of the East African Legislative Assembly. This body is in charge of administration of the Assembly. She reports that LAW- Uganda has achieved much by way of changing several laws and mounting successful challenges to discriminatory customs. She says of the LAWA Program, "the American spirit of hard work, creation and utilization of opportunities/space, focus on results and excellence, resilience, spirit of democracy and adherence and implementation of laws, innovativeness and creativity spurred on by respect for human rights - changed my life forever, am eternally grateful." And we are grateful for her Honor's unwavering commitment to the human rights of women.

In her capacity as the DC Health Benefit Exchange Authority's (HBX) Senior Deputy Director for Operations/Chief Operating Officer, **Ikeita Cantú Hinojosa** (US 2002-2003) focuses on systems and operational infrastructure. She also continues to act as the Privacy and Data Security Officer for the exchange. From 2013-2015, she served as HBX's Associate General Counsel and Policy Advisor, and oversaw the DC Health Link Assister Program, the DC Health Link Navigator Program, and the DC Health Link Certified Application Counselor Program. In 2014, she served as HBX Interim Call Center Operations Manager for the DC Health Link Contact Center.

Claudia Center (US 1992-1993) reports, "In April 2014, I moved from being the director of the disability program at the Legal Aid Society – Employment Law Center to being a Senior Staff Attorney in the national ACLU's disability rights program. In my still new-ish job, I work on the intersection of disability rights with voting, education, decision-making, and criminal justice. It's really fun to do some new areas of law."

WLPPFP Alumna Judge Carol Beier is happy to welcome **Gillian Chadwick** (US 2014-2015) to Kansas. Gillian will join the Washburn University School of Law as a full-time clinic faculty member beginning in the Fall of 2016.

Neena Chaudhry (US 1997-1998) has been promoted to the Director of Education at the National Women's Law Center. She also reports a favorable settlement in an 11th Circuit case where a middle school student in Alabama was raped after being used as "bait" a sting operation to catch a known sexual harasser.

Aya Fujimura-Fanselow (LAWA 2004-2005) recently started working at the International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net) as the Program Coordinator for the Women and ESCR Working Group.

Sally Goldfarb (US 1983-1984) was recently honored at Rutgers Law School's annual public interest award event for her efforts to improve the legal response to violence against women. Her work on the Violence Against Women Act was also the subject of a profile in the Fall 2015 issue of Rutgers Magazine.

Karen Guss (US 1993-1994) reports that she has re-entered the full-time workforce, after several years of grant-writing and lawyering on a part-time basis. Karen is now the Director of Communications for the Department of Licenses and Inspections in the Administration of new Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney.

A big congratulations to **Margaret Johnson** (US 1995-1996) who was promoted to full Professor at University of Baltimore School of Law effective July 1, 2016. In addition to being the Co-President of the Clinical Legal Education Association, Margaret published the following: Commentary: *Oncale v. Sundowner Offshore Svcs.*, *Feminist Judgments: Rewritten Opinions of the United States Supreme Court* (Cambridge Univ. 2016) (forthcoming); *Changing Course in the Anti-Domestic Violence Legal Movement: From Safety to Security*, 60 VILL. L. REV. 145 (2015); *Security, Converge! –Panel on Intersections of Gender, Economic, Racial and Indigenous* (In) Justice, Security, 5 U. MIAMI R.S.J.L. REV. 357 (symposium).

We are proud to report that **Jamesina King** (LAWA 2001-2002) is now a Commissioner on the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. She is the first Sierra Leonean woman to serve in this capacity.

Sara Kluberanz (US 2013-2014) has joined the Department of Transportation's Office of Civil Rights

The ranks of WLPPFP Professors keeps growing. Another huge congratulations goes out to **Laurie Kohn** (US 1998-1999), who now has tenure at the George Washington University Law School.

Mande Limbu (LAWA 2000-2001) moved from the White Ribbon Project to Pathfinder, where she is the Director of Advocacy & Public Policy.

Emi Lobti (LAWA 2008-2009) reports that she completed her assignment as Protection Associate with UNHCR Cameroon in November 2016. In that capacity, she sought international protection for the Nigerian refugees fleeing the attacks of Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria. Emi is now an Associate Protection Officer, with UNHCR IRAQ, Duhok Sub-Regional Office, where she is promoting the interest of people displaced by fighting between the Iraqi forces and ISIS.

Gladys Mbuyah (2010-2011) has been enthroned as the Queen Mother of her village and is now a traditional ruler. Gladys says, "I intend to use this position during my reign and enlighten my people about the importance of throwing away repugnant customs and this will definitely foster our mission to enhance the status of women." We couldn't be more thrilled to have a LAWA Alumna assume such a critical position.

Jill Morrison (US 1998-1999) was elected to the International Law Steering Committee of the DC Bar Association.

Jessica Powers-Heaven (2009-2010) is now a Foreign Service officer with the Department of State. After many months of training, she arrived in Guadalajara, Mexico for her first two-year tour.

Lourdes Rivera (US 1990-1991) has transitioned from the Ford Foundation, where she worked in an incredible position for almost 10 years supporting sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice in the US and globally. Lourdes reports, "I am now happily on sabbatical enjoying Spring and Summer in NYC with some travel in between. I hope to score Hamilton lottery tickets." We wish her luck with her future endeavors, and those Hamilton tickets!

Marion Stillson (US 1987-1988) was voted onto the Board of Directors of Virginia ACLU, for a three-year term. She was also re-appointed to the Election Law and Voter Protection Committee of the Fairfax County Democrats for a two year term.

Tamar Schwarz (US 1987-1988) was promoted to Associate Professor of Legal Writing at the University of Richmond School of Law.

Katie Wallat (US 2012-2013) is leaving Bread for the City, and joining Georgetown University Law Center as one of the clinical teaching fellows in the Community Justice Project.



Advisory Board

Deborah Epstein

Director of the Domestic Violence Clinic and Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center

Marcia Greenberger

Co-President, National Women's Law Center

Mary Hartnett

Adjunct Professor of Law; Vice-Chair, American Bar Association's Committee on the Rights of Women

Eleanor Holmes Norton

Congresswoman for the District of Columbia and Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center

Judith Lichtman

Senior Advisor, National Partnership for Women & Families

Wendy Williams

Professor Emerita, Georgetown University Law Center

Reflections on Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

The discussion was fascinating,
wide-ranging, and inspiring -
I could have listened to her for hours!

- she inspired me to believe that no matter
how many societal, cultural or personal
barriers exist in life; you can achieve your
dreams and even exceed them.

I loved her reminder of our responsibility to use our
legal training to do good for others → if we don't, we are
no different than plumbers who get paid to practice a skill.

I will always remember when she told us that if
you're a lawyer and you're not working to make the
world a better place, you may as well be a plumber.

Being in Justice Ginsburg's presence was
inspiring. She reminded us to
"do something outside" ourselves and
"hold up half the sky." - Words of
encouragement I will carry
throughout my career.

At this stage in our careers, it was particularly
gratifying to hear Justice Ginsburg confirm the
importance of unalashed feminism - not the sneaky
"f-word" some might think it to be - and the
unique responsibility for those in the legal
profession to maintain order in society while
squeering positive change.

"Lawyers have the ability to do something
for the world."