

OUTREACH

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

2020

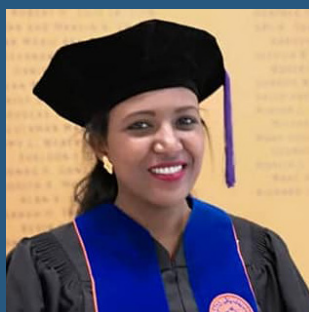
SPRING | SUMMER

Congrats to our Grads!



**Twasiima (Tricia)
Bigirwa**

Twice Shamed:
The Use of Uganda's Anti-
Pornography Act to Turn
Revenge Pornography
Non-Consensual Image
Distribution Victims into
Villains.



Haleta Fiseha Giday

Confronting the Sacred:
Eradicating the Whipping
of Women in Southwest
Ethiopia.



Beverly Mumbo

A Penny for Your Womb:
Unraveling Exploitation
and Limitation of Rights
in the Kenyan Surrogacy
Practice.



Connie Nawaigo

The Living, the Departed
and Our Ancestral Land....!
Protecting Rural Women's
Right to Fair and Adequate
Compensation After
Mining Evictions.

Because we were not able to have a graduation ceremony this year, we want to honor our graduating Leadership & Advocacy for Women in Africa Fellows! Despite COVID, they were able to present their theses virtually to the largest crowd any class of LAWAs has ever had. Here is to a job well done, under exceptionally challenging circumstances.



Reflections on this time in our History

Alumnae and supporters have reached out to express their concern about the current WLPPFPs, and how they've been impacted by the COVID 19 crisis and unrest over the continued incidents of police brutality against Black people. I asked two of the fellows, LAWA Twasiima (Tricia) Bigirwa and U.S. Fellow Nikola Nable-Juris, to describe how these events have impacted on their fellowship experiences and their continued commitment to advance social justice for all.

Jill Morrison
U.S. 1998-1999
Executive Director

Broken, but not Beyond Repair

Growing up in the 1970s and 80s, my family and friends feared traveling on the New Jersey Turnpike because there was always the risk of being stopped for DWB—Driving While Black. The brutal beating of Rodney King took place my senior year of college, and I recall the dismissive attitude of a white secretary in the academic advising office where I worked. As a Black woman, it takes a lot for America to disappoint me. I don't expect much.

I've always been extremely honest about racism in America with the Leadership & Advocacy for Women in Africa Fellows. We discuss everything from why most of the homeless people they see are Black, what privileges they might experience as Black foreigners as compared to native-born descendants of enslaved Africans, and how even their classmates from Asia and South America might have absorbed some harmful messages about the myth of white supremacy and treat them poorly. But there was one thing I always assured them of: their right to protest the injustices they see.

Over the past few years, there have been a number of opportunities for the LAWAs to make their voices heard. One of the most memorable was when Attorney General Jeff Sessions was invited to speak at Georgetown Law in September 2017. The protest was scheduled during our LAWA Seminar, so I asked the Fellows if they wanted to cancel class and attend the protest. They asked if it was safe, and told me about the risks of protesting against the government in their own countries; protes-

tors were routinely subjected to violence. I assured them that would NEVER happen here. America had learned its lesson in the 1960s, when videos of peaceful civil rights demonstrators being attacked with dogs and firehoses were broadcast across the world. That day we all joined the protest, which the LAWAs recalled as one of the highlights of their year.

As I watched the tear gassing of protestors in front of St. John's Church on June 1st, I thought "America has finally managed to disappoint me." The promise that was secured by my parents' generation has been broken. The promise that I made to my Fellows, I can never make again. We are broken.

It was only the even bigger crowds over the following days, representing people of all ages, faith traditions and colors, with signs in a multitude of languages, affirming that BLACK LIVES MATTER that convinced me that we are broken, but not beyond repair.

Post-script: I am proud to report that Tristin Brown (U.S. 2019-2020) is listed as counsel for the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs challenging the administration's actions on June 1st in Black Lives Matter D.C. v. Trump.

The Emperor is Naked, and the Rest of Us Are Watching

Twasiima (Tricia) Bigirwa
LAWA 2019-2020

As the world continues to struggle with the Coronavirus pandemic, the growing inequalities that have long existed in many of our societies have only been magnified. The poorer are poorer, those that had almost no access to health care are at greater risk, and so on. As the shadows of inequality continue to wreak havoc on the lives of the most minoritized in all communities, perhaps nowhere else has this reality been played out as in the United States. These institutionalized inequalities are so deeply rooted a scourge, that not even a global health crisis could have managed to stop them in their tracks. In what the New York Times described as an “incalculable loss”, the newspaper named over 100,000 U.S. citizens that have died of COVID 19. Of these, there are a disproportionate number of Black people whose deaths are a direct result of the systems that allow for racial and class inequality. Unemployment levels are at their lowest since the Great Depression, but once again, this burden is unevenly felt by Black and brown people. By 2018, Black Americans were 12.5% of the population, but comprised 21.4% of those living in poverty. This number will undoubtedly rise as a consequence of the pandemic.

The glaring issue is that America is not the “land of the free” where dreams come true as it has been sold in film, television, and books. This carefully crafted image has mostly begun to crumble as the rest of the world, and Americans themselves, are forced to contend with the failure in leadership and thus the delayed responses in dealing with the pandemic threat, the defunding of international health organizations (and by extension violation of international legal responsibilities), the lack of testing equipment, limited medical support and many other failings that Americans themselves have pointed out. It should be unconscionable that a country so wealthy and so powerful by many standards would fail its citizens as it has.

And yet, in the midst of all this, there is the continued pain of Black people being brutally murdered by those who are tasked with protecting and serving that cannot be ignored. As white protestors, against the advice of medical experts, took to state capitals with guns and signs demanding that they reopen the country because they deserve to get haircuts and massages, police officers watched on, and the President tweeted encouragement. In contrast, protestors whose righteous anger at having to watch and mourn yet another Black person being murdered by law enforcement were tear-gassed, permanently injured with rubber bul-

lets, and jailed. These actions regrettably are not unprecedented. George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade and Rayshard Brooks are only the most recent examples of the violence that has been directed at Black people in this country with very little consequence. At this point, many have explained why this should not be excusable, and yet it still is. It is the normalization of these injustices by judicial systems, political leaders and a large part of the society that has allowed a police officer to kneel, with his hands in his pockets, on a Black man's neck for more than eight minutes.

Comparisons of the recent actions and failures of the U.S. such as attacks on the press, deployment of the military on the streets, suppressing protests, inadequate health systems and so on to non-Western countries, with the undertones pointed specifically to countries in the Global South, implies that the U.S. was (until recently) morally superior. But these narratives never reflected how the U.S. treats the rest of the world's citizens, nor a considerable number of its own. It is equally important that as Americans seemingly go through this period of self-introspection and planning, that they think about those similarly affected by the actions of their government.

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Nikola Nable-Juris
US 2019-2020

"Mumsie, do you want to play house with me?" Less than three weeks after my third c-section, I was trying to bathe a newborn for the first time. I suppressed a violent urge to answer my son with, "What do you think I've been doing for the past month?"

My husband had bathed our older children as newborns, but our third son's baths fell to me. When he was 12 days old, his father moved out of the house because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Neither of us questioned that my husband would return to work after our child's birth. Adrenaline-junkie ER doctors like him seek out crises when they can make a difference in someone's life. But I worry about him: his physical health, because of his repeated exposure to coronavirus as well as chemicals for his daily decontamination procedures; his mental health, because he is treating so many dying patients while living alone; and his safety, because of the racism and xenophobia he experiences as an Asian American.

I also worry about my normally docile and empathetic 6-year-old, who tantrums and hits me and then gives me a drawing afterwards as a peace offering sans apology. It feels eerily reminiscent of the intimate partner abuse cycle, as he desperately seeks some semblance of control. I worry about my energetic 3-year-old, who makes new meaning of #AloneTogether when he refuses to play alone, sleep alone, even use the bathroom alone. I worry about my newborn, who only knows his relatives through an iPad and is blissfully unaware that my time is spent in harried spurts of diapers and distance learning.



Yet I know that others have it far worse than I do. I'm physically healthy, with a stocked pantry and freezer, high-speed internet, loved ones who check on me, school staff who support my children, and an abundance of small-child affection.

I am far more worried about those for whom justice delayed is justice denied amid the coronavirus pandemic. I am angered that our medical system fails Filipino and Filipino American healthcare workers, who, as a direct result of colonialism, shoulder a disproportionate burden of this country's caregiving. I mourn that our criminal legal system fails women like Andrea Circle Bear, a pregnant Native woman who died of coronavirus during an unjust incarceration. As a resident of Ward 4, which currently has the District's highest positive rates, I see my Black and Latinx neighbors impacted by our country's racist infrastructure.

Seekers of social justice know this moment is our call to action, our chance to reshape the "new normal" of our communities, our

country, and our world. Advocates are leveraging this crisis to change how women's work is frequently unpaid and to reaffirm the importance of quality schools and childcare. We fight further restrictions to abortion access when politicians claim abortion isn't essential healthcare. We protest racism that is so pervasive and accepted that white men with assault rifles can freely enter state capitals while Black men can't jog down the street and Black women aren't safe in their own homes.

We must confront these chronic, egregious cases, but we must also do the more challenging work of turning the looking glass on our own organizations. Have we listened to the disability justice movement's wisdom about remote work and flexible schedules? Or the economic justice movement, about how fair wages and paid family leave help employees and their families thrive? Do our organizations enable banks that support the prison industrial complex or the fossil fuel industry? Do we

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Alumnae Spotlight

Our Fellowship is proud of the various ways our Alumnae contribute to advancing social justice in the U.S. and throughout the world. Here is just a sampling of their recent activities.

DC's loss is Pittsburgh's gain. **Jabeen Adawi (U.S. 2018-2019)** is now the Director of the Family Law Clinic at the University of Pittsburgh.

Tristin Brown (U.S. 2019-2020) has been hired as counsel at her placement organization, The Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs.

Congrats go out to **Andy Budzinski (U.S. 2016-2017)** who has been appointed Assistant Professor of Law and Director of the General Practice Clinic at UDC David A. Clarke School of Law.

Claudia Center (U.S. 1992-1993) is now the Legal Director of the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF).

Neena Chaudhry (U.S. 1997-1998) was a part of the team that filed suit against the Trump administration challenging the new Title IX rules on sexual harassment in grades K-12.

We are thrilled to report that the **Deborah Epstein (U.S. 1990-1991)** is one of the 2020 recipients of the American Bar Association's Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award. Former WLPPFP Director and Advisory Board Member Mary Hartnett led the charge in gathering many alumnae to support Deborah's nomination.

Sinsi Hernández-Cancio (U.S. 1995-1996) is now the Vice President for Health Justice at the National Partnership for Women and Families.



The Fellows were thrilled to get some quality time with the District of Columbia's own, Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton, one of WLPPFP's founders and an Advisory Board Member.

Desirée Luckey (U.S. 2019-2020) will be continuing her Fellowship with the Health Equity team at the National Women's Law Center

Beverly Mumbo (LAWA 2019-2020) was awarded a Fellowship from Georgetown University Law Center to support her internship at the Center for Reproductive Rights' Nairobi Office.

Agata Pelka (U.S. 2014-2015), Senior State Legislative Counsel at the Center for Reproductive Rights, will be heading to the New York office for a few years.

Lourdes Rivera (U.S. 1990-1991), Senior Vice President of U.S. Programs at the Center for Reproductive Rights, was featured in the Ford Foundation's #FutureisHers series. Well-deserved Lourdes!

Jasmine Sankofa (U.S. 2015-2016) started a new role as the Youth Justice Policy and Research Associate at Children's Defense Fund-California (CDF-CA). She is also completing training as a full-spectrum doula.

Bigirwa, continued from p. 3

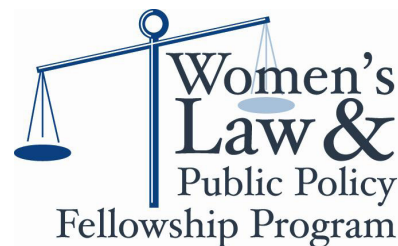
Africans and many others around the world are outraged by the continued murders of Black people in the U.S. It is my hope that Americans who consider themselves progressive will be just as outraged at the killing of Black and brown people by the U.S. government outside their borders. We must garner collective solidarity to fight against the reproduction of occupation and brutality. As Americans express shock and fear at having their military deployed on U.S. soil, it is impossible to ignore the dissimilar reaction when the U.S. military is deployed in other countries. These same troops represent fear, loss and turmoil for other Black and brown people throughout the world. There are countries who have suffered countless deaths because of invasions and bombings by U.S. troops. There are also countries where citizens are unable to have access to food, medical care and other vital social amenities because of America's direct and indirect foreign policies. May all this be a catalyst for the kind of long-awaited change that demands self-examination and will ultimately see a transformation of systems and institutions.

Nable-Juris, continued from p. 4

pay reparations to indigenous communities or descendants of enslaved individuals if we still benefit from their oppression? Do we correctly pronounce our colleagues' names and honor their pronouns? Does organizational leadership mirror the broader community, including elevating leaders from the communities we serve, or does almost everyone look like me, a straight, white, cisgender, middle class woman? If nothing else, we should emerge from this pandemic with an understanding that the world is even more interconnected than we thought, and that our advocacy must be intersectional in ways we never dreamed possible. The call to action must also be for our transformation.

My husband returned home after exactly five weeks. His small actions include sharing late-night feedings and happily reclaiming baby baths, but he's also radically adjusted his fall work schedule so that we can jointly shoulder whatever chaos is to come with school and daycare closures. Our sons are excited about "Camp Dada," when I return to work and he takes his previously planned parental leave in July and August, testing the District's newly enacted Paid Family Leave Act.

I'm hopeful that my youngest son will not remember this pandemic or the old world that preceded it, even though my eldest son most certainly will. While mourning what has been lost, I hope I also remember the year my son was born as a time of rebirth toward a more just society.



Advisory Board

Deborah Epstein

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

Marcia Greenberger

Co-President Emerita, National Women's Law Center

Mary Hartnett

WLPPFP Director Emerita and Adjunct Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center

Eleanor Holmes Norton

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