

OUTREACH

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

2024

SPRING | SUMMER



All for One...

And one for all!



Jill C. Morrison
Executive Director

This famous quote from Alexandre Dumas' *Three Musketeers* captures what it means when individuals come together in a community of care. The collective will provide the needed support to make sure every individual can thrive. When one advances, they are advancing the interests of the collective.

One of the many things that sets this fellowship apart is the great deal of time the fellows spend together, in our Seminars, at events, and at things they organize on their own. It means that they build genuine care and concern for one another in a very short time. This is among the many joys of my job, and one that I experience frequently. Disappointments are met with empathy, support, and, when requested, advice from the group. Every article published, case won, honor bestowed, or job secured is thoroughly celebrated, as it means that a Women's Law & Public Policy Fellow is advancing our collective desire for a more equitable world. Here is a recent example.

One of the Leadership & Advocacy for Women in Africa Fellows, Wubrest Adamu, was selected as one of the six LL.M. commencement speakers. As the LAWA Fellows were gathered at the Old Executive Office Building to present their theses to White House staff, I told the group about this honor. Seeing their collective excitement for her brought tears to my eyes. It was truly an "all for one" moment. There was no doubt that she would represent the LAWAs with grace and pride on graduation day.

And that she did! "I am grateful for my LAWA sisters. For those of you who don't know what LAWA is, or who the LAWAs are, we are a team of women Hoyas from Africa! ... LAWAs are women scholars, humanitarians, human rights activists and feminists echoing an African woman's voice." The "One for All" that our Fellows and alumnae represent is so much larger than their immediate circles. Just flip to the Alumnae Spotlight on page 3, and you will see that this sentiment reflects the astounding commitment that our U.S. and African Fellows have to advancing justice and uplifting women and girls throughout the world.

Alumnae Updates!

My goodness, our Alumnae are a very, very busy bunch of people! Our WLPPFPs and LA-WAs are out in the world, serving individual clients, driving policy change at every level of government, developing culture-shifting scholarship, and shaping the next generation of lawyers. Prepare to be inspired!

Amanda Allen (US 2009-2010) has joined the Board of Directors for the Abortion Care Network.

Sophia Balemian-Spencer (US 2022-2023), Associate Counsel on the worker's right team at the Washington Lawyers' Committee, is working on wage theft and sexual harassment cases. Sophia was also featured on the National Reentry Network's Black Table Talk in February.

Sabrina Bernadel (US 2020-2021) is now the Manager of the Education Civil Rights Alliance (ECRA) at the National Center for Youth Law where she protects and advances the rights of historically underrepresented students.

Asees Bhasin (US 2020-2021) will be starting as a Visiting Associate Professor and Murray Fellow at University of Maryland Law School. An article she co-authored, *Antiracist Expert Evidence*, is also forthcoming in the *Yale Law Journal* (Vol. 134).



Twasiima (Tricia) P. Bigirwa (LAWA 2019-2020) published her debut book, *ebyeshongoro bya Debra* (songs of Debra), described as "a collection of poems written in Runyankore and

English that chronicle the times we find ourselves in, the state of the world and the feelings of our hearts. Using humour, wit, and honest recollections, Twasiima looks at the ways our histories continue to influence our current times and makes demands of us to sit with both the contradictions and un-comfortabilities that emerge from current events and geopolitical shapings."

Soon-to-be Dr. **Pela Boker-Wilson (LAWA 2017-2018)** will begin her studies at the Central European University for their Ph.D. Program in Human Rights. Pela was formally inducted into the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in Geneva, in April this year during the 112th session. Her work began with a review of anti-discrimination efforts by Albania, Mexico, Qatar, the Republic of Moldova, and San Marino. The Committee also presented a Decision adopted under the Committee's early warning and urgent action procedure urging Sudan to prevent further escalation of ethnic violence and racist hate speech. During the session, Pela was appointed to the Working Group on Individual Complaints Mechanisms. Says the Commissioner "With my feet wet, I am eagerly looking forward to the 113th session in August 2024, when I will be given the opportunity and broader mandate to Co-Rapporteur on specific countries and tasks."

Andy Budzinski (US 2016-2017) sends this great news: "As of July, I'll be joining the faculty at American University Washington College of Law as an Associate Professor and Director of the Elliot Millstein Civil Advocacy Clinic. My practice will focus on representing survivors of intimate partner violence and LGBTQIA+ DC residents in civil cases."

Bonnie Carlson (US 2019-2020) was promoted to Associate Professor at Mercer University School of Law. She also received the 2023 Board of Visitors Faculty Award.

Anna Carpenter (US 2011-2012), who has been named Dean of the OU College of Law, joins the ranks of WLPPFPs leading law schools!

Congratulations to **Robyn Carr (US 2007-2008)** who was promoted to Assistant Director in the Division of Enforcement and Investigations!

Sherry Cassedy (US 1983-1984) reports, "I am transitioning to spiritual teaching, writing, and retreat work, particularly women's spirituality which I believe to be the saving grace in the face of dying patriarchal institutional religion. Another book may be in the works..." Looking forward to it Sherry!

Megan Challender (US 2015-2016) was promoted to serve as the Director of Legal Services at the Network for Victim Recovery of DC (NVRDC) in May 2023. NVRDC represents survivors of all crimes in Civil Protection Order, Anti-Stalking Order, Title IX, and Criminal Victims' Rights cases. Additionally, Megan was appointed as Chair of the Election Law and Voter Protection Committee for the Fairfax County Democratic Committee and will lead the efforts to protect the vote in the largest county in Virginia in 2024 (presidential) and 2025 (gubernatorial election).

In May, **Jaspreet Chowdhary (US 2010-2011)**, Senior Legislative Counsel at Compassion & Choices, was a featured speaker at the Indian American Impact Project's 2024 *Summit and Gala: Desis Decide* on a panel entitled "Desi Care, Desi Loss." She's also been active as a Board Member for First Shift Justice.

The workplace equity consulting firm co-founded by **Pamela Coukos (US 1995-1996)**, Working IDEAL, is in its 7th year of operation and has done a range of terrific work over the past year: from partnering on a racial equity audit of BlackRock to helping many nonprofit organizations evaluate pay equity and develop innovative new approaches to strengthen equity and transparency in compensation and career paths, to strategic advising on social impact for the Black Orchestral Network and the Human Rights Campaign.



Courtney Cross (US 2013-2014) Director of the Survivor Representation & Advocacy Clinic at UNLV's William S. Boyd School of Law, presented *Parenting Under Siege: Reckoning with Coercive Control* as part of the University of California, Irvine's Initiative to End Family Violence.

Hilda Stuart Dadu (LAWA 2012-2013) is a Founder and a National Coordinator of the Coalition for Women Human Rights Defenders Tanzania and a Secretary to the Eastern Africa Women Human Rights Defenders Network. Hilda describes their mission: "The Coalition for Women's Human Rights Defenders Tanzania was officially registered in 2019 under Non-Governmental Organizations Act of 2002 to address unique and specific challenges and rights of women human rights activists in the country. Its vision is of a Tanzania in which all women and girls are free from all sorts of human rights abuses. The core mandate of the organization remains the same, that is to protect women human rights defenders, targeting women from all ages who are engaged to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms and people who engage in defending rights of women and gender equality, individually and in association with others."

Lauren Birzon Harriman (US 2021-2022) reports, "Starting July 1st, I'll be joining the DC Affordable Law Firm as their Family Law Managing Attorney. I'm also serving a term on the DC Bar Foundation's Young Lawyers Network Leadership Council."

Congratulations to **Cindy Hounsell (US 1989-1990)**, whose organization, Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement (WISER) won an award from the American Society on Aging.

Margaret Johnson (US 1995-1996) is definitely #goals! Margaret is the winner of the 2024 Dorothy B. Beatty Award for Outstanding Accomplishment in Family Law by the Women's Law Center of Maryland. She was Visiting Professor of Clinical Law teaching the Reproductive Justice Clinic at NYU Law School in Fall 2023. Margaret published *Lawyers, Clients & Narrative: A Framework For Law Students And Practitioners* (Carolina Academic Press 2d ed. 2023) (with Carolyn Grose) and co-authored *Title IX and "Menstruation or Related Conditions"*, in the Michigan

Journal of Gender & the Law. She is also serving as an expert on *Our Bodies Ourselves Today, Menstruation through Menopause Vertical*, and as an Advisory Group Member on the *Global Status of Menstrual Justice Report*.

Recent LL.M. graduate **Nicole Joseph (US 2022-2023)** started a new position as the Domestic Violence and Family Law Supervising Attorney at Bread for the City.

West Coast wrongdoers beware! The formidable **Debra Katz's (US 1985-1986)** law firm, Katz Banks Kumin, opened a new San Francisco Office in January.

Ophelia Kemigisha (LAWA 2022-2023) reports: "I'm delighted to inform everyone that I have joined Outright International as a UN Program Officer! I'll be working with movements to ensure that the rights of sexual and gender minorities are duly accounted for in UN processes and mechanisms. Outright International works with partners around the globe to strengthen the capacity of the LGBTIQ movement. I'll be based at the organization's headquarters in New York."



Two LAWA alumnae are among Nairobi's Top 50 Women Lawyers for 2024! Join me in congratulating **Leah Kiguatha (LAWA 2007-2008)** (litigation) and **Teresa Omondi (LAWA 2016-2017)** (civil society). Leah was also appointed to the Board of FIDA-Kenya, with the able assistance of our many Kenyan alums.

Emilia Lobti (LAWA 2008-2009) sends greetings from Rwanda, where she currently works with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees as a Protection Officer, managing humanitarian operations in relation to refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons, asylum seekers, and mixed movements.

In June, **Emily Martin (US 1999-2000)** of the National Women's Law Center presented on the impact of the Supreme Court at the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law.

The Center for Survivor Agency and Justice, headed by our own **Erika Sussman (US 2001-2002)**, launched a new survivor-driven National Policy Platform for Survivor Economic Equity and hosted a two-part series in May on state and national priority areas.

Gladys Mbuyah (LAWA 2010-2011) reports, "I was selected as a Steering Committee Member of the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers. For the next one year we shall be shaping the landscape of peace through the inclusivity-based community practice."

Lauren McCulloch (US 2016-2017) accepted an Adjunct Faculty position at Drexel in the Undergraduate Law Department teaching a class about domestic violence and protection orders.

Congratulations to **Molly McNulty (US 1988-1989)**, who was promoted to Associate Professor of Public Health Law and Policy at the University of Rochester. Molly reports "I've been able to maintain my connection to reproductive rights by signing various amicus briefs, filed by public health organizations in *Dobbs* and *Idaho*. I teach a combination of undergraduates, and graduates in the masters in public health program. My courses are Healthcare and the Law, Public Health Law and Policy, Maternal Child Health Policy and Advocacy, and Introduction to Health Policymaking. In the graduate program, I teach Health Policy Lab."

Lily Milwit (US 2021-2022) reports, "I'm still a staff attorney at Equal Justice Under Law litigating cases in an effort to end the criminalization of poverty. We won a case in the fall in federal court (E.D. Cal.) challenging Sacramento County's use of a bail schedule that did not account for indigence, resulting in people being held in jail longer solely because they could not afford bail. As a result of our lawsuit, the county is under an injunction enjoining them from utilizing the bail schedule. Local judges must now assess bail on an individual basis, and must consider ability to pay. Our organization also won a handsome attorney's fee settlement from that case (woohoo section 1988) enabling us to continue to litigate these types of cases at no charge to our clients. We also had a summary judgment hearing in D. Montana challenging pretrial fees that do not consider ability to pay. We are hoping to end the practice of requiring exorbitant pretrial fees (which, when not paid, lead to criminal punishment) to people who are legally innocent without any inquiry into ability to pay. I'm returning to UBalt this fall to teach Reproductive Rights & Justice." Lily also visited WLPPFP to present an outstanding seminar on Race and Poverty.

Beverly Mumbo (LAWA 2019-2020) joined Women's Link Worldwide as Senior Legal Programs Manager where she leads regional advocacy and guides strategic impact litigation on sexual and reproductive rights and health matters.

Ashah Mastullah Mwanga (LAWA 2022-2023) is bringing her thesis to life! In April, Ashah along with her organization Islamic Women's Initiative for Justice Law and Peace, filed a petition in the Constitutional Court of Uganda requesting that the government operationalize formal Qadhi courts. As Ashah noted in her thesis, family law cases are currently heard by informal Qadhi courts, with little oversight, standards, or implementation of human rights norms. Her petition has received wide coverage as she awaits a hearing date.

Ashah also received Georgetown Law's CALI award for excellent performance in Health, Law and Islam.

Nikola Nable-Juris (US 2019-2020) has (re)joined the Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth in the new role of National Legal and Policy Director.

Gloria Ngumi (LAWA 2021-2022) has this update "I joined Climate Resilience for All as an Operations & Development Consultant — working on fundraising and their heat/sustainable cooling projects. I also joined Capital for Climate as an Investment Opportunities Researcher and Writer — here I work to map investment opportunities for Nature-Based Solutions that help investors and entrepreneurs make informed decisions to accelerate the flow of climate finance to low and middle-income countries."



Abigail Nthuba (LAWA 2022-2023) sends this report on her new firm. "We have recently partnered with an NGO here called Botswana Gender Based Violence Prevention and Support Center, which provides shelter and counseling services. We will be providing their clients with litigation services, and we are currently working on advocating for legal changes and engaging lawmakers to motivate for much needed legal reform. My hope is that this is a five year plan which will bring the changes that we desperately need."



Beverline Ongaro (LAWA 2012-2013)

reports: "To state my heart is overflowing with joy is an understatement. I am delighted to have had the privilege to recite a poem I wrote titled, "I Will Break the Law," during the launch of the publication, *Strengthening Gender Equality in Law: Mapping Discriminatory Laws against Women and Girls in Kenya*. (The report is accessible on the UNWomen Kenya website.) Fuelling this overflow of joy was the chance to reconnect with the luminaries of gender equality, and women's empowerment, including **Leah Kiguatha (LAWA 2007-2008)**. Additionally, in a robust consultative workshop on police reforms in Kenya held by the Police Reforms Working Group, I recited the poem, "We The Police, Police The Police," a creative elucidation on the role of citizens in holding the police accountability using human rights standards. More power to the creative ways of educating and entertaining!"

Agata Pelka (US 2014-2015) received the 2023 Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services "Assuring Health Equity Award" for supporting the Biden Administration's goal of improving access to reproductive health coverage with her work as a Health Insurance Specialist with the Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight. In March, she started a new role as a Policy Advisor with the HHS Office for Civil Rights. Agata is a part of this year's cohort of the International Experience and Technical Assistance (IETA) program through the CDC's Global Health Center. She will be detailed as a CDC Technical Advisor to the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland this summer. Agata also generously lent her time to this year's career panel.

I'm guessing no one expected a quiet retirement from **Lynn Paltrow (US 1984-1985)**? She's continued her work to advance Reproductive Justice, writing on the impact of *Dobbs* and the Alabama IVF ban in *Ms. Magazine* and other publications.

Lourdes A. Rivera (US 1990-1991), who is now at the helm of Pregnancy Justice (founded by Lynn Paltrow) testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee about the consequences of criminalizing pregnancy and the dangers of fetal personhood, following Alabama's IVF ban.



Jane K. Stoever (US 2004-2005), Deborah Epstein (US 1990-1991) and Laurie Kohn (US 1998-1999),

met up at the clinical teaching conference, "Unfinished Arcs: Resistance and Resilience Amid Backlash," in St. Louis. Laurie was also awarded the 2024 Distinguished Associate Dean for her service as the Clinical Dean at the George Washington University Law School.



Joy Welan (US 2009-2010) sends this report from the Civil Rights Division's Disability Rights Section. "My team published a regulation on web and mobile app accessibility that I have been working on since 2015!" Joy also graced us with her presence at the career panel.

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(1) 1998-1999 WLPPFPs Laurie Kohn, Jill Morrison and Johanna Bond celebrate the Juvenile Justice Clinic's 50th anniversary and founder Wally Mlyniec; (2) A reproductive rights rally at the Supreme Court? Great place to spot some WLPPFPs!; (3) LAWAs Wubrest, Consolata, and Furaha-Joy at the main campus commencement; (4) 2022-2023 WLPPFPs Nicole Joseph, Veronica Faison, and Mackenzie Darling catching up; (5) Kenna Titus (US 2023-2024) on duty at the Supreme Court rally; (6) Fabiola, Ashlynn, and Jackline celebrate!

LAWA Thesis Topics

The 2023-2024 LAWA Fellows presented their theses to several audiences, including USAID and the Georgetown School of Foreign Service African Studies Program. For the first time, LAWAs had the opportunity to engage with White House staffers on these critical issues of African women's human rights. Thank you to our host Rachel Vogelstein, Deputy Director & Special Assistant to the President.

Wubrest Adamu (Ethiopia) -- *"What Does She Bring to the Table?": Strengthening Women's Voices in Ethiopian Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding Efforts*

Consolata Chikoti (Tanzania) -- *Child Bride, Life Denied: Asserting the Right to Life in Opposing Child Marriage in Tanzania*

Jackline Menjo (Kenya) -- *STOP KILLING US! The Quest to Criminalize Femicide as a Separate Offence from Murder in Kenya*

Furaha-Joy Sekai Saungweme (South Africa) -- *Demanding Rights and Claiming Remedies: #TIMESUP FOR THE Pan African Parliament!*

Fabiola Uwera (Rwanda) -- *In Her Best Interest? Addressing Teen Pregnancy While Defending Teen Mothers' Human Rights in Rwanda*



In addition to completing their LL.M. degrees, the LAWAs were active on campus, in their communities, and advancing scholarship: Furaha-Joy published a volume on sexual harassment (1). Jackline contributed to Georgetown's International Law Journal; Wubrest published a piece on femicide for the Wilson Center, Consolata built interest in Tanzania



for her work to fight child marriage, and Fabiola engaged in activities around DC to commemorate the Rwandan genocide (2).



Advisory Board

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