2016 Law School Partnership Fellows Help Fulfill Gideon’s Promise

ATLANTA (August 31, 2016) – Gideon’s Promise proudly announces its 2016 Law School Partnership Program (LSPP) class – this group of 16 recent law school graduates is the third LSPP class to join over 1,000 committed public defenders from across the country in a growing movement to transform criminal justice.

“The LSPP provides a unique pipeline for passionate law students into a client-centered career where they join an inspirational, national community of public defenders as soon as they leave law school,” says Ilham Askia, executive director of Gideon’s Promise. “This program encourages and mentors young lawyers as they venture into meaningful legal careers, ensuring equal justice becomes a reality for our poorest citizens.”

“Fifty-one years after the landmark case Gideon v. Wainwright, the United States Supreme Court made it clear that equal justice depends on poor people having access to quality representation, and in most of the country this promise remains unfulfilled,” Jonathan Rapping, indigent defense reform expert and president and founder of Gideon’s Promise says. “The LSPP gives law schools a vehicle to help their graduates work to make this ideal a reality. This model is a critical piece of any effort to reform criminal justice in this country, ensuring ‘justice for all’ is not an empty promise, but a commitment that rings true for every single American.”

The program is a partnership between the social justice nonprofit, the Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), participating law schools, and public defender offices across the nation. The LSPP recruits talented, third-year law students who are interested in public service and places them in full-time positions at underserved public defender offices. This year, our LSPP participants will provide zealous representation for clients in nine partner offices in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina, South Dakota, and Tennessee.

To date, many of the nation’s top law schools have joined this initiative including: American University Washington College of Law; Boston University School of Law; Cornell Law School; George Washington University Law School; Harvard University School of Law; Hofstra University Maurice A. Deane School of Law; New York University School of Law; Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law; University of California, Berkeley School of Law; University of California, Irvine School of Law; University of California, Los Angeles School of Law; University of Chicago Law School; University of Michigan Law School; University of Oregon School of Law; University of Pennsylvania Law School; University of Southern California Gould School of Law; University of Texas School of Law; Vanderbilt Law School; and William & Mary Law School.

This year’s LSPP participants include:
Cornell Law School, Edward Flores;
Hofstra University Maurice A. Deane School of Law, David Kline and Lisa Capellupo;
New York University School of Law, Nathan Rouse;
Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law, Amanda Koons and Melody Dernocour;
UC Berkeley School of Law, Cristiana Giannini;
UC Irvine School of Law, Aaron Adams, Elizabeth Tissot, and Leigh Dickey;
UCLA School of Law, Brittania Poon and Hsueh Han Lu;
University of Chicago Law School, Andrew Sullivan;
University of Oregon School of Law, Kiara Fiegi;
University of Southern California Gould School of Law, Alex Hurd; and
University of Texas School of Law, Mark Balfe

“The work these young lawyers do represents the highest calling of our profession,” Rapping says. “We are grateful to these exceptional law schools for working with Gideon’s Promise and the Department of Justice to provide these graduates this opportunity. And we are proud of their dedication to serving our nation’s most vulnerable citizens.”

At the recent Summer Institute, held from July 31 to August 13, 2016 at the University of Mississippi School of Law, LSPP participants began the Gideon’s Promise signature Core 101 training, officially launching their new profession and furthering the mission of the Gideon’s Promise movement to transform the justice system.

For more information about Gideon’s Promise, please visit www.GideonsPromise.org, or contact (404) 997-6045.

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