

Former Teacher Now Fighting for Workers' Rights

Fellowship Bolsters Her Resolve to Advocate for Workers

PBF placed 88 law students in paid 10-week fellowships throughout the country this year. Lindsay Poetz, now a third-year student at Michigan State University College of Law, is a great example of the talented students who participate in our program. Here's her story:



"When I left behind a long-term teaching career, I had one objective in mind: to become an attorney who fought for teachers. This summer, the Peggy Browning Fund helped me actualize that goal when I was selected as a Summer Fellow at American Federation of Teachers (AFT) in Washington, DC. As a former member of AFT, I was aware of the work they do on the front lines, but I

had no idea about what goes on behind the scenes in the legal department. Here I experienced attorneys who work every day to protect members, locals, and unions in so many different ways.

This summer, I was given the opportunity to work on *Janus* defense, fair pay for workers, National Labor Relations Board issues, elections under the LMRDA, and so much more. When I was a teacher in Florida, school vouchers and education tax credit programs were of great interest to me, and I spent a great deal of time fighting for legislation to fund public schools. This summer, I was given the opportunity to work with the AFT General Counsel researching the issues around the future Supreme Court tax credit case *Espinosa v. Montana Dept. of Revenue*. The work I did was shared with the attorney who will write the amicus brief for AFT. I also worked with the General Counsel on writing a bill for New York State regarding fair pay for adjuncts. I was honored that these incredibly important tasks were entrusted to me.

On my second day at AFT my mentor, Jessica Rutter, who was a PBF Summer Fellow in 2011, told me that we were

going to the Teamsters to hear NLRB Chairperson Ring speak. I listened to the union attorneys ask him tough questions to shine a light on the harm that is being done to workers under his leadership. As we walked out of the building, I turned to her and said, 'As a union member, you often wonder how your dues are being spent. Well, now I know that mine were being spent incredibly well!'

Jessica gave me many incredible learning opportunities this summer. She encouraged me to attend labor and education hearings on Capitol Hill, took me to protests and rallies, and to hear Justice Elena Kagan speak. She was given similar opportunities and wanted me to have the same life-changing experiences. I also worked with every attorney in the AFT legal department in some capacity and with other departments such as research and legislative affairs.

The highlight of my fellowship came during AFT TEACH, a summer conference for teachers. During this conference, AFT unveiled a lawsuit against Secretary of Education DeVos for failing to protect individuals from predatory student

(continued on pg. 7)



Lindsay Poetz with her mentor, Jessica Rutter, PBF'11.

"Throughout my first two years of law school, I often questioned my decision to leave behind a solid career in order to fight for teachers. My Peggy Browning Fund fellowship not only bolstered my resolve, but it showed me that I was capable of doing the necessary work to improve things for workers across America."

- Lindsay Poetz, PBF'19



Margaret A. (Peggy) Browning

A Beacon for Workers' Rights

Our namesake was, by all accounts, an exceptional person whose life and qualities left their mark upon the legal community and on the national scene. Born in Tennessee and educated at Swarthmore and the University of Pennsylvania Law School, Peggy was a creative and dynamic attorney.

While her name could have graced the masthead of any mega law firm, she chose to devote her energies to workers' rights. In her defense of workers' interests, she never lost a case in the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. Peggy was tirelessly focused on issues such as union representation, fair and equal pay and decent working conditions.

Her achievements strongly justified President Clinton's nomination of her as the first union-side lawyer in history to be appointed to the National Labor Relations Board.

The Peggy Browning Award is presented annually to social justice champions who have distinguished themselves with passion and dedication to the rights and needs of workers and their families.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Peggy Browning Fund educates and inspires the next generation of advocates for workplace justice. Through fellowships, workers' rights conferences, networking and other programs, the PBF provides unique opportunities for law students to work for economic and social justice.

Worker Centers Need & Want PBF Fellows



The number of fellowships you, our donors, support continues to grow and we appreciate your continued investment in our Summer Fellows' future. In PBF's first Fellowship year, 1998, ten fellowships were awarded and two of the ten went to worker centers. Worker centers are community-based organizations that engage in a combination of services, advocacy and organizing, to protect low paid workers from exploitation by employers. The number of worker centers throughout the country has grown from only five in 1992 to over 150 today. **These centers have emerged as a central component of immigrant and people-of-color communities and are playing an indispensable role in helping needy people navigate the working world.** This summer you, our donors, supported 88 paid fellowships including 26 at worker centers throughout the country.

"In the largely nonunion service economy - low-end construction, meatpacking, light industry, and what's left of the garment trade - worker centers are calling attention to exploitative industry practices and pioneering creative strategies, especially in the context of widespread subcontracting. In

their monitoring and enforcement of federal and state labor standards and regulations, worker centers attempt to fill the void created by an ineffectual and disengaged federal and state action." Fine, Janice. (Oct 2011). *Worker Centers: Entering a New Stage of Growth and Development*. Retrieved from NewLaborForum.cuny.edu

When working at worker centers, our Fellows play an active role in enforcing workers' legal rights and protecting them from abuse. They stop wage theft, discrimination, unjust retaliation, and fight for job protection. In many instances, the experience launches the Summer Fellow into a legal career fighting for workplace justice.

More worker centers continue to request Peggy Browning Summer Fellows and we hope to place more at worker centers in 2020. To be successful, we will need more people to support this effort. Won't you please help us meet this challenge? Send us a gift today or share this newsletter with your friends and family. Together, we can help to ensure that the most needy workers in our communities have access to legal representation in the workplace.



Joseph Lurie
President and Founder

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21st Annual Workers' Rights Conference Students Challenge PBF & Labor Movement

Eager to Learn – Want to See Progress

Over 160 students participated in our 21st annual National Law Students Workers' Rights Conference on October 18 & 19 at the Maritime Conference Center in Maryland.

From the opening panel, Bolder Than Ever: How Innovative Union Organizing is Transforming the Labor Movement, through the keynote address/Peter Mitchell Labor Law Lecture delivered by Harvard Law's Sharon Block, through 18 workshops, to the closing panel discussion on creative strategies for organizing workers in non-union industries, students expressed enthusiasm and passion for workers' rights.

“As an organizer, it is interesting to see young legal minds' first interaction with our concepts in the labor movement.”

Several Summer Fellows raised issues regarding how the labor movement needs to move more quickly to address racial bias and all forms of harassment in the workplace. A lunchtime



Joe Briggs, Public Policy Counsel of the NFL Players Association leading the Sports and Labor Law workshop.

“The Immigration Law and Basics of Labor Law workshops gave me just what I needed to complete my studies.”

“My school has labor-related courses but the emphasis is on Employment Law. It's completely different when you know the 'why'!”



Friday night panel on innovative union organizing moderated by Jonnee Bentley of SEIU (left) discussed organizing nurses, journalists, fast-food and other service workers.

discussion among all students resulted in many strong ideas for how the Peggy Browning Fund could play a part in working toward real change.

Students felt strongly that PBF can have and should have a vital role in advocating for the necessary changes that will make the labor movement more inclusive, responsive and relevant. This conversation will continue at many

levels with the intent of developing best practices throughout the movement.

Early conference feedback from the attendees indicates that they learned much from each session, appreciated having an introduction to Labor Law and enjoyed meeting others who share their desire to help workers. The photos and quotes on this page tell more of the story.

“The Public Sector Labor Law workshop of post-Janus strategies was enlightening and gave me inspiration as an aspiring labor lawyer.”

2019 Fellow



Zachary Brooks
**Major League
Baseball Players
Association**
New York, NY

My most significant project involved the 2020 MLB schedule. I was asked to check the league's proposed schedule for the 2020 season against the collective bargaining agreement and determine whether there were any violations. This project was both challenging and rewarding. The challenge came from the pressure of knowing how important the assignment was to both the Players' Association and the players. The Association has fought hard to get the players the rest necessary for them to perform at the highest level, and I wanted to make sure that I did quality, thorough work to ensure that the bargaining table discussions were executed in real life. The project was rewarding because I was able to find a small violation in the schedule which had to be corrected. Although the violation was minor and it was probably a quick fix for MLB, it was cool to have a say in how next year's MLB season is going to play out.

I am grateful for this opportunity. I came into this internship wanting to work on the labor side of sports and I will walk away with that dream still intact. I have a better understanding of the steps I need to take in my career to obtain a position in the field as an attorney, and I am eager to continue on this path.



Sayra Contreras
**Farmworker
and Landscaper
Advocacy Project**
Chicago, IL

I was given assignments that challenged me and allowed me to conduct detailed research to learn how individuals can recover after facing workplace injustice ... FLAP reassured me that the legal field is ideal for me.

My experience at FLAP was much more than a summer fellowship... it was a ten-week opportunity to grow and immerse myself in a field of law that does so much for the people in our community

and throughout Illinois. This experience allowed me to use my Spanish-speaking skills to bond with many of our clients. Most importantly, this fellowship was enlightening as I gained insight and was constantly challenged and intrigued by the work.

Best of all, I experienced what it is like to be able to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who face injustice. FLAP allowed me to independently explore the field of labor law. All in all, I worked with like-minded individuals who strongly believe in FLAP's mission and work hard to make the impossible possible!



Summer Fellow Madison Slupe heading to the picket lines with members of Sheet Metal Workers Union Local 19 and Scabby in Philadelphia.

"I feel very fortunate to have made a difference in the lives of workers ... One epiphany I had during my fellowship was that many workers are unaware of their rights because their employers fail to explain them. Many workers also don't know how to go about enforcing their rights. This has inspired me to consider ways to improve accessibility of legal assistance and accessibility of legal information."

- Devon Blevins, Fair Work Center, Seattle, WA

Highlights



Prince Senayah
United Auto Workers
Int'l Union
Detroit, MI

The UAW was very supportive and invested in ensuring that I and my colleagues gained more insight on the goals of the labor movement. Along with trips to auto assembly plants, the union sponsored me for a two-day AFL-CIO Conference for Minority Students interested in labor law. There I participated in an intensive workshop on labor arbitration.

As a minority student who is interested in issues of socio-economic justice,

learning about the active role that the movement played in the efforts to secure civil rights for minorities was delightful. It is even more heartwarming to know that through collective bargaining, labor unions continue to fight to reduce discrimination and unfair treatment of employees in the workplace.

I am very grateful to the Peggy Browning Fund for this opportunity and I'm very appreciative of UAW International for accepting me this summer. This summer experience will definitely have a tremendous impact on my legal career.



Lane Shadgett
AFSCME
Washington, DC

It was a fantastic opportunity to gain insight about how a big union operates, and how much it means to its members—not only because of the material benefits it can provide, but because of the sense of family that worker solidarity can provide. It was eye-opening to learn the unique challenges faced by unions in the public sector, and the opportunities to improve public workers' lives. **Because of my time at AFSCME, I am more dedicated than ever to pursuing a career in labor law.**

"I felt valued and trusted, and like I was someone worth investing in. I was given the opportunity to stay on as a law clerk during the school year, which I was thrilled to accept, and I will be starting in September."

- Maura Moosnick, Gladstein, Reif & Meginniss LLP, New York, NY

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2019 PBF Summer Fellows Jacqueline Uranga, Consuelo Amezcua and Rosie Brown at Lobby Day in Oakland, CA.

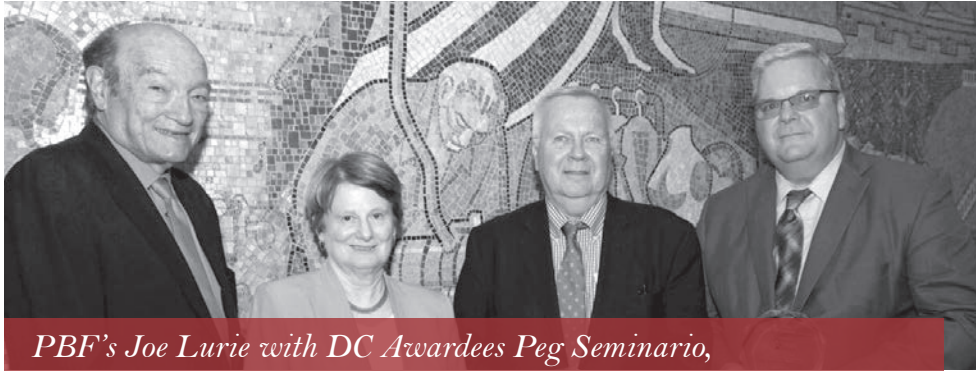
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2019 DC Awards Reception

Lauded Labor Career Professionals



PBF's Joe Lurie with DC Awardees Peg Seminario, Ted Green and Eric Dean

PBF's 2019 Awards Reception in Washington, DC in June took on a special context due to the highly-regarded careers of the awardees. After 42 years at the AFL-CIO, Peg Seminario recently retired as Safety and Health Director. She led the labor movement's work on worker safety and health issues. Ted Green has worked at the Laborers' for over 44 years and currently serves as General Counsel. Introduced by LiUNA General President Terrence O'Sullivan, Ted spoke passionately about the importance of the work of the Peggy Browning Fund in today's labor climate. For 35 years, Eric Dean has been a major force in his union, beginning as a

journeyman ironworker in Local 63 Chicago to his current role as General President of the Int'l Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental & Reinforcing Iron Workers. His leadership skills were well known to the union's members and the leaders who brought him along through the years.

PBF Alumna Flor Garay was a Summer Fellow for 3 consecutive years: at Make the Road New York in 2017, UFCW in Washington, DC in 2018 and at AFSCME this year. Flor spoke about her previous fellowship experiences and what she hoped to accomplish at AFSCME this summer.

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- LiUNA! Midwest Region



Alumna speaker Flor Garay sharing her multi-year fellowship experience.

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October 2019

Former Teacher Now Fighting for Workers' Rights

Fellowship Bolsters Her Resolve to Advocate for Workers

(cont'd)

loan companies and the denial of so many Public Service Loan Forgiveness applications. President Weingarten unveiled the suit to a room full of teachers, many who had been adversely affected by loan forgiveness denials. Prior to this, I attended many meetings regarding the suit and the filing, so it was the culmination of many hours of hard work in order to help teachers who should benefit from this program. I also worked at a student loan booth gathering data from teachers in order to build a plaintiff class. This is where I discovered that I really love talking to union members one-on-one and hearing their stories.

From my first day to my last, I researched over a hundred legal issues. **One of the projects I am most proud of was a collaboration between two Peggy Browning mentors (Jessica Rutter and Amanda Jaret) and two Fellows (Sarah Anderson and me).** We created an NLRB case chart in order to track cases that have recently been overturned and cases that they are

actively trying to overturn. It was such a glaring look at all of the rights that are being stripped away from workers under the current administration. When I attended a brown bag lunch at the AFL-CIO, one of the attorneys asked if I had worked on that project and told me how impressed they were with it. Some of the other work I did directly impacted members and locals, such as the red state teacher strikes and retaliatory legislation.

Through my summer experience, most importantly, I learned that I can be a labor attorney who fights for workers. I always envisioned myself working for a teachers' union, but I now know that all labor attorneys are fighting important battles. Going forward, I plan on fighting for all workers who need a voice, not just teachers. My experience in Washington, DC showed me that the labor community works very closely for one common goal: to protect the rights of workers performing the jobs our society cannot function without."



Lindsay Poetz standing at the Capitol Building for the AFL-CIO No On NAFTA 2.0 rally.



Lindsay with AFT President Randi Weingarten

2019 Regional Workshops Begin In Washington, DC

Attracting Students from Multiple Schools

PBF's Regional Workshop Program, *Advocating for Workplace Justice*, began this year on September 12 in Washington, DC hosted by Howard University School of Law and Georgetown Law Center. **More than 110 students from these schools and American University attended to learn more about careers in labor, employment and public interest law and the Peggy Browning Summer Fellowship Program.**

The group was welcomed by Homer C. La Rue, Professor of Law at Howard with the Dean of Howard's Law School, Danielle R. Holley-Walker, providing the opening remarks and moderating the panel's discussion. Panelists included Walakewon Blegay, *PBF'2010*, counsel for the DC Nurses Association; Carmia

Caesar, Howard Law School's Director of Experiential Learning; Mark Gaston Pearce, Executive Director, Workers' Rights Institute at Georgetown and Melinda Holmes, Partner, Murphy Anderson, PLLC.

The panel encouraged the students to make the most of their law school years by reaching out to as many labor contacts as possible to learn how to navigate within their field of interest and to help find their first job. The theme of the evening was "Network, network, network!"

PBF has planned for 16 workshops at law schools around the country and hopes to add more before year's end. For more information about this program



2010 PBF Alumna Walakewon Blegay shares her advice and networking experiences with students from Howard, Georgetown and American Universities at the first PBF Regional Workshop in September.

go to www.peggybrowningfund.org/regionalworkshops or contact Ruby Tumas at 267-273-7995.

Educating Law Students on the Rights and Needs of Workers

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New York Awards Reception Wednesday, April 22

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Upcoming Event – Mark Your Calendars

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For more information visit www.peggybrowningfund.org/events
or call 267-273-7994