Peggy Browning Fund

PBF Solidarity Series

PBF 2011 Summer Fellow Greg Ainsley

Greg attended the University of Wisconsin Law School in Madison and accepted a Peggy Browning Fellowship at the union-side law firm of Levy Ratner, PC in New York City. He is now Associate Counsel for New York State United Teachers (NYSUT).

What has been your career path since your Peggy Browning Fellowship?

"After graduating from law school, I worked at a private law firm for about a year before becoming an attorney at New York State United Teachers (NYUST). I have spent most of my legal career at NYSUT, and I am currently Associate Senior Counsel. As an attorney with NYSUT, I work on a variety of issues on behalf of its locals and their individual members."

Did your PB Fellowship affect your course of study in law school?

"I majored in Industrial and Labor Relations in undergrad, so I had an academic interest in labor before the Peggy Browning Fund. Like most law students, however, I did not have any significant real-world experience with the labor movement or labor law. I worked as Peggy Browning Fellow at Levy Ratner, P.C. and had an excellent experience. My work as a Peggy Browning Fellow really helped to confirm my interest in labor. After my PBF Fellowship, I tried to select courses that would be most useful in helping me to practice in labor and employment law."

Did it help you to obtain employment in labor law?

"I believe that being a Peggy Browning Fellow did help me to obtain employment in my desired field. The Peggy Browning Fellowship Program is a well-recognized program and it is highly regarded among organizations that represent working people. I also used the list of PBF participating organizations as a resource for my job search out of law school. My office also brings on PB Fellows as law clerks each summer."

Has the interests or goals of today's law students changed from your years in school?

"Although I have not been a law student for a while, I believe that most law students want to use their law degree in an impactful and socially responsible way. Where law students ultimately end up will largely be based on the job market, and it definitely takes work to find entry-level attorney positions doing union-side legal work. When I was a law student, labor classes were not especially popular. However, there has been a renewed interest in the labor movement, with unions enjoying an increase in public support in recent years. I suspect this may make work in the labor movement a more appealing career goal for current law students."

Greg returning from a court appearance at the New York Supreme Court.

Are you connected to other PBF alumni? Are you active in your area's Alumni Association Chapter?

"Yes, I am connected with many other PBF alums, and I try to stay active with my Alumni Association Chapter. Although the COVID-19 pandemic halted many of the social and professional events that I would usually attend, I expect to reengage more with my fellow PBF alums in the coming year. The labor world is a pretty small world and you will regularly see a lot of the same faces at various meetings and functions, and I think that it is very important to keep in touch with this great network of people."

What advice would you give to today's students who are considering a career in labor or public interest law?

"Go for it! I think that this field provides the opportunity to perform meaningful work that can positively impact the lives of many individuals. There is definitely a need for capable attorneys who are willing and able to advocate for working people. The Peggy Browning Fellowship program is also a great way to get real exposure to those areas of law.

Over the years, I have directed numerous law school students interested in labor law to Peggy Browning. I had a wonderful experience as a fellow, and it helped to get me started on my career path. I would also recommend that interested students be proactive with networking and reaching out to attorneys in their desired field."