

PBF Solidarity Series

PBF 2000 Summer Fellow Catha Worthman



A graduate of Berkeley Law, Catha has been working for economic and social justice for more than twenty years. She was a Peggy Browning Summer Fellow in 2000 at the Asian Law Caucus in San Francisco. As a founding partner at Feinberg Jackson Worthman & Wasow LLP in Oakland, CA, Catha represents employees & retirees in class actions & other multi-plaintiff actions, as well as in individual litigation & administrative proceedings. Catha often partners with nonprofit social justice organizations and labor unions in impact legislation and policy strategies. She recently shared reflections on her fellowship and how it still shapes her practice, thoughts on the importance of collaboration skills in labor law, and emerging strategic innovations in the labor movement.

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

“I love my work on behalf of SEIU-United Healthcare Workers West and the Fairness Project, as well as the class actions I do on behalf of working people and retirees. The work is creative and broadly social justice-oriented in ways that call on all my skills and talents. Perhaps my most important skill is collaboration with others, including with my union clients, other social justice organizations, and co-counsel. Not only is such collaboration essential to success, it’s often the most satisfying aspect of my work both professionally and personally.”

What has surprised you the most in your career?

“Perhaps the most surprising thing: I’m now on the Board of Directors at the Asian Law Caucus, where I did my Peggy Browning Summer Fellowship in 2000. I have been on the board for 10 years, and the... fellowship was the reason I found out about the organization in the first place.”

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

“I would absolutely advise students considering a career in labor or public interest law to apply for a Peggy Browning Fellowship. It is a great way to demonstrate interest in the labor movement, and the firms and organizations who participate offer such a wide variety of possibilities for doing meaningful work. I consider it a huge positive when someone applies to my firm with a Peggy Browning Fellowship on their resume.”

What is the biggest change you see coming to the labor movement, from a lawyer's perspective, in the next ten years?

“Lawyers who want to be part of growing the labor movement over the next 10 years need to develop expertise in more than just labor law and build their capacity to support innovative new strategies to build power for workers. This has been true for many decades, but it’s even more true today. Some of the most exciting developments include the growth of union cooperatives, alliances between unions and civil rights organizations for racial and gender justice, support for ballot initiatives that serve broad progressive goals, and more.”

