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30th Annual Inspire! Awards Celebrate Public Service



Cardozo's Center for Public Service Law celebrated the 30th Annual Inspire! Awards on May 23, the first in-person awards ceremony in three years due to the pandemic. The Inspire! Awards celebrate students and community leaders who made strides in public service over the past year.

Alissa Bernstein, director of the Center, welcomed the attendees both in-person and on Zoom by saying "Our honorees are all engaged in meaningful work to help keep public service a way of life at Cardozo." Dean Melanie Leslie praised the awardees and said, "I hope it inspires everyone here when you hear about the important work our students and honorees are doing."

The Center's Community Impact honorees included Ronda B. Goldfein, Executive Director, AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania; Sam Rivera, Executive Director, On Point NYC and Kailin See, Senior Director, On Point NYC. All three honorees have pursued inspiring efforts promoting sensible drug use policies to ensure safety and promote healing for vulnerable individuals. They have led the efforts for a public health approach to overdose prevention, including establishing facilities for safe consumption.

Goldfein is co-founder and vice president of Safehouse, a public health approach to overdose prevention that seeks to open a supervised injection site in Philadelphia. During Cardozo's 2022 Public Interest Law Advocacy Week (P*LAW), Goldfein was a panelist and shared with the Cardozo community why sensible drug use policies are crucial for achieving a safer and more equitable society. This P*LAW session had a record number of attendees, with over 200 participants. She gratefully accepted the award, saying, “There will always be a fight for social justice whether you’re deep in the fray or by cheering from the sidelines.”

Rivera and See have been leading advocates in the NYC area for sensible drug use policies, and they both have aided in establishing safe consumption sites in NYC.

Dean of Student Services Jenn Kim presented the Leaders in Service Awards to the 2022 Pro Bono Scholars and said, “Our seven scholars have worked tirelessly throughout their time in law school and especially during their 3L year.”

Recipients included 3L students Kyle Bersani, Cecily D'Amore, Lexy Merlot Ginsberg, Nancy Kartos, Bryan McCracken, Annslee Perego and Andrew Reisman.

Leaders in Service Awards were also presented to student Pro Bono Project Leaders. Recipients included Carsyn Costello '22 and Shelley Wu '23 for their work at Courtroom Advocates Project; Kanika Sachdeva '22, Uncontested Divorce Project; Lauren Finzi '22 at Unemployment Action Center and Amanda Vice '23, Suspension Representation Project.

Student Service Award winners were Isaac Altman '22, Yomidalys Guichardo '22, Iona Ehrlich '23, Sharon Shaji '23, Rachel Barkley '24 and Gowri Cheepurupalli '24.

Alissa Bernstein and Professor Betsy Ginsberg presented the final awards of the evening, the Champions of Change Awards, to 3L student Victoria Lowe, 3L student Miles Dixon-Darling and Yomidalys Guichardo.