Public Interest Section
2008 Awards Ceremony

December 9, 2008
Loews Philadelphia Hotel

Past Andrew Hamilton Award Recipients

Louis S. Rulli  Ilene W. Shane
Janet F. Stotland  Irv Ackelsberg
Bradley S. Bridge  Mark Schwartz
Robert G. Schwartz  Robert B. Dunham
Stefan Presser  Lynn A. Marks
The Hon. Phyllis W. Beck  Sharon Dietrich
Ann S. Torregrossa  Thomas K. Gilhool
Carol E. Tracy  Terry Fromson
Welcoming Remarks
Laura A. Feldman, Chair, Public Interest Section

Presentation of 2008 Law Student Outstanding Service Awards

Neil Byrne, Villanova University School of Law
Mary Clark, Temple University Beasley School of Law
Laura Haushalter, Widener University School of Law
Jamie Rahn, Drexel University Earle Mack School of Law
Amy Retsinas, University of Pennsylvania Law School
Conor Wilson, Rutgers University School of Law, Camden

Introduction of 2008 Andrew Hamilton Awards
U.S. District Court Judge Louis H. Pollak
Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Jane Cutler Greenspan

Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient
Michael Churchill

Andrew Hamilton Award Recipients
Judy Berkman
Linda Ware Johnson

Selection of Higginbotham Fellowships
Laura A. Feldman

Closing Remarks
Angus Love, Vice Chair, Public Interest Section

2008 Public Interest Section Officers
Laura A. Feldman, Chair
Angus Love, Vice Chair
Ourania Papademetriou, Secretary
Karen L. Forman, Treasurer
A graduate of Harvard College and cum laude graduate of Harvard Law School, Michael Churchill joined the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia in 1976, where he is now of counsel. Prior to that, he clerked for Chief Judge J. Edward Lumbard in the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, then was an associate and then partner at Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll.

Churchill also served as acting general counsel of the Philadelphia School District in 1984. Among the many landmark cases litigated by Churchill are the Philadelphia School District desegregation case, *PHRC v. School District of Philadelphia*; *Dickerson v. U.S. Steel*, a race discrimination case under Title VII; *Freeman v. City of Philadelphia*, a police hiring class action; and *McLaughlin v. Pernsley*, which established the right to transracial adoption in Pennsylvania.

Churchill is a 1994 recipient of the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law’s Edwin D. Wolf Award. In 1995, Churchill was recognized with the Philadelphia Bar Association’s Obermeyer Award for service to education and in 2000 he received the Guardian Civic League’s Special Recognition Award.
Judy Berkman

Judy Berkman, managing attorney at Regional Housing Legal Services, came to RHLS in 1996 with prior experience in private practice and legal services. She works on a broad range of home ownership projects, primarily focusing on large-scale developments of home ownership units for sale to mixed-income buyers.

Berkman is currently an elected member of the Board of Governors of the Philadelphia Bar Association and serves on the Executive Committee of the Bar Association’s Real Property Section.

She has received several awards including special recognition for her gender bias work and for her work as a founder of the Tangled Title and Philadelphia LawWorks programs. Berkman has worked with the state and local bar associations to enhance the status of women in the legal profession, to protect women’s rights, and to eliminate gender and other biases in the Pennsylvania justice system.

She received her A.B. from Wellesley College and her J.D. from the Boston University School of Law.
Linda Ware Johnson

Linda Ware Johnson received her Juris Doctor degree from Rutgers University and became a member of the Pennsylvania Bar in 1986.

She has practiced law representing low-income tenants and tenant organizations as an attorney in the Housing Unit of Community Legal Services, Inc. for more than 20 years. For several years, she served as chair of TAG/TURN, the premier tenants’ rights advocacy group in Philadelphia.

In addition, she has served as a member of the Philadelphia Bar Association’s Judicial Selection and Retention Committee and the Executive Committee of the Real Property Section. She currently serves as co-chair of the Municipal Court Committee of the Philadelphia Bar Association.

Johnson is also a former recipient of the statewide legal services Award For Excellence for her community legal education work through a local television station.
Law Student Outstanding Service Awards

Neil Byrne’s commitment to public interest law is evident in the hours he has committed to assisting low-income clients, as well as the leadership he has provided to ensure that other students may have the opportunity to work in public interest. As an intern with Consumer Bankruptcy Assistance Project, he has tackled the issues of Chapter 7 bankruptcy, debt counseling and predatory lending practices. He has worked with the Villanova Tax Clinic representing low wage earners before the IRS and Tax Court and has participated in pro bono activities including Lawyering Together and volunteering with Homeless Advocacy Project. He was a recipient of a Villanova Public Interest Summer Fellowship his first summer and has since served as treasurer for the Villanova Public Interest Fellowship Program for which he has given many hours to raise funds for the Summer Fellowship Program.

Mary Clark brought a long history of service to Temple Law and was awarded a Rubin-Presser Public Interest Scholarship for her commitment to public interest law. She worked at HIAS during her first year summer and also during the school year, where she demonstrated a keen understanding and dedication to the needs of low-income clients. She is fluent in Spanish and brought her special talents to Friends of Farmworkers as a Peggy Browning Fellow during the summer after her second year. She has also volunteered at Nationalities Service Center and recently completed a clinical with the Camden Public Defender. She also served the Temple Law community by serving as the Secretary of the Student Public Interest Network which raises funds for summer internships in public interest.

Laura Haushalter, a Martin Luther King Semester of Service Fellow, has demonstrated a strong commitment to public interest law during her time at Widener University. She has become a leader in the Widener Law community, where she coordinated an auction and raffle that raised more than $14,000 to fund law students doing public interest work in the summer as a member of the executive board of Widener’s Public Interest Law Alliance. She also coordinated Widener Law’s Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program and vastly increased student participation in the program. She has also served veterans appealing denials of benefits through the Veterans Law Clinic and helped constituents with a variety of problems as a district representative for Congressman Joe Sestak. She also found time to volunteer at Delaware Volunteer Legal Services, assisting them with their client intake.

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Jamie Rahn quickly emerged as a natural leader and advocate for social justice in Drexel Law’s inaugural class. While in law school she has worked with the Homeless Advocacy Project, Community Legal Services, and the AIDS Law Project. After spending a summer working for the Homeless Advocacy Project, she helped to develop Drexel Law’s Adopt-A-Shelter Program, recruiting her classmates to participate in the shelter clinics and sharing with them the skills she learned as an intern. As a leader in the Women’s Law Society, she had a key role in networking with the Women’s Law Project and Philadelphia Legal Assistance to create Drexel’s Domestic Violence Assistance Project. As a third-year student, she is continuing her public interest work, participating in one of Drexel’s field clinics at the AIDS Law Project.

Amy Retsinas came to Penn Law after spending several years in service to others, earning her a Toll Public Interest Scholarship. She continued her commitment to service while in law school by becoming a buddy volunteer with Action AIDS and working on various projects as a co-coordinator of the Reproductive Rights Project. She interned in Family Court as an advocate with Women Against Abuse, and co-chaired the Equal Justice Foundation Auction, which raised more than $60,000 for uncompensated summer employment. She helped organize the 2008 Sparer Symposium, dedicated to exploring the revitalization of Philadelphia. She spent her summers interning at Alaska Legal Services and at Kairys, Rudovsky, Messing & Feinberg and currently works as an extern in the Employment Unit at Community Legal Services. She is a senior editor on the *Journal of Law and Social Change*.

From the first day he entered law school, it was clear that Conor Wilson would become a public interest lawyer. His involvement in school pro bono activities includes leadership of the Association of Public Interest Law chapter and the Hurricane Relief Network Alternative Spring Break. He has been very active in Rutgers’ election protection efforts, recruiting more students to participate and redesigning the training. His summer work has included two stints at the Defender Association of Philadelphia and he is now working as an extern at Nationalities Service Center. He has also raised funds for various public interest efforts, including Rutgers Law Alternative Spring Break. He has a special blend of commitment, creativity and tenacity which make him a highly effective advocate.
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