

28th CARDOZO LAW
PUBLIC
SERVICE
CELEBRATION

INSPIRE!

AWARDS

2020 Inspire! Awards Ceremony

Honoring Our Public Service Heroes of 2020

Welcoming Remarks

Alissa Bernstein

Director of the Center for Public Service

Opening Remarks

Melanie Leslie, '91

Dean & Samuel Belkin Professor of Law

Community Impact Honorees

Sharonne Salaam

Social Justice Activist and Mother of Yusef Salaam
of The Exonerated Five

Presented by Alissa Bernstein & Yusef Salaam

Angela Black

Social Justice Activist and Sister of Kevin Richardson
of The Exonerated Five

Presented by Victoria Lowe, '22 & Kevin

Richardson

Staci Dupont

Social Justice Activist and Wife of Criminal Justice
Reform Activist Dominic Dupont

Presented by Alison Goldman, '21 & Dominic

Dupont

Class of 2020 Call to Action

Pro Bono Promoters:

Pro Bono Scholars

Naomi Gallimore, '20

Brandon Kronstat, '20

Claire Mooney, '20

Matthew Shapiro, '20

Destinee Salomon, '20

Presented by Jennifer Kim

Associate Dean of Student Services

Pro Bono Promoters:

Pro Bono Project Leaders

Brigette Merzel, '20

Clare Haugh, '21

Jenny Lam, '20

Anne Bredin, '21

Christopher Junior, '21

Stephanie Morales, '21

Brandon Kronstat, '20

Presented by Chaula Shukla

Assistant Director of Career Services

Community Impact Awards

Aaron Friedman, '22

Shaul Sultan, '22

Elan Stiberman, '21

Tziona Breitbart, '21

Corey Hirsch, '20

Brigette Merzel, '20

Presented by Isabella Pori, '21

Gamechanger Awards

Nolberto Zubia, '20

Presented by Isabella Pori, '21

Judy Dahl, '20

Presented by Professor Ed Stein

Johnny Thach, '20

Presented by Alissa Bernstein

Matthew Christiana, '20

Presented by Professor Seema Saiffee

Closing Remarks

Carey Bertolet Grand

Associate Dean of Career Services

Community Impact Honoree Awards

The Community Impact Honoree Awards are presented to community members who have made a significant impact on the Cardozo community and the public interest at-large. **Our 2020 honorees are Sharonne Salaam, Angela Black, and Staci Dupont.** During Cardozo's P*Law 2020 program, our community impact honorees shared their experience with the films *When They See Us*, *The Central Park Five*, and *Raised in the System* illuminating their stories of injustice. Our honorees are family members of men who suffered tragic injustices in our criminal justice system. During P*Law 2020, our honorees inspired a meaningful discussion about the often-overlooked plight of families whose loved ones have endured miscarriages of justice. The films and our honorees' stories have opened the eyes of millions to the need for criminal justice reform.

Our Community Impact Honorees will be recognized by their family members during the ceremony:

Sharonne Salaam / Yusef Salaam
When They See Us
& *The Central Park Five*



Angela Black / Kevin Richardson
When They See Us
& *The Central Park Five*



Staci Dupont / Dominic Dupont
Raised in the System



Sharonne Salaam was born in Birmingham, Alabama and lived there during the period where segregation was the law of the land. She drank from COLORED ONLY water fountains and many times entered business through their back doors with her parents to obtain service. She attended colored only schools until relocating with her family to New York City for a better life. In New York City she completed her education.

Salaam has been an advocate for justice for over 40 years. Most people know Salaam as the mother of Yusef Salaam one of the Central Park Five. Salaam is a founding member of "Justice 4 The Wrongfully Incarcerated." On May 9, 2016, she began the 9-day walk from Harlem to Albany, NY. In Albany, legislation was put forth by former Assemblyman Keith Wright on behalf of the wrongfully incarcerated and their families. Bill 3978 is now sponsored by Assemblyman Jeffrion Aubry. When passed it will offer the wrongfully incarcerated housing, social services, medical assistance, free vocational and college educations, job placement preferences, as well as clearer paths for monetary compensation for years of wrongful incarceration.

For many years before this Salaam worked with People United for Children, advocating for families with children in foster care and in juvenile justice facilities. She held programs educating parents on issues related to advocating for their child/children's return from foster care and ways to stabilize their families. She offered both advocacy and legal education programs. Over the years Salaam has assisted in the return of thousands of children to their families from foster care. Salaam has served on many boards including Harlem's Community Board 10 and community radio station WBAI 99.5 in New York City.

Sharonne Salaam, Community Impact Honoree
Social Justice Activist and Mother of Yusef Salaam of The Exonerated Five



Angela Black, Community Impact Honoree
*Social Justice Activist and Sister of Kevin Richardson
of The Exonerated Five*



Angie worked tirelessly to help her brother Kevin fight his initial conviction and advocated to get his conviction overturned. She is portrayed in *When They See Us* and *The Central Park Five*. Angie has rallied at One Police Plaza and 100 Centre Street to advocate for injustices toward Black men in the criminal justice system. Once Kevin's conviction was overturned, Angie did not stop her advocacy. She believes that justice is incomplete until there are people held accountable. Angie is a spokesperson for the Innocence Project, Executive Director of Hail the Lamb Ministry, and dedicates her time to feeding the homeless and fighting the unjust criminal justice system.

Staci Dupont is a John Jay College graduate with a degree in Forensic Psychology. She worked in law enforcement for 30 years, retiring almost three years ago. She was involved with the Kings County District Attorney's Re-entry Task Force and is personally supportive of women and families of the incarcerated. Staci has been married to Dominic Dupont for nearly 19 years. Dominic was given clemency by Governor Cuomo in January 2018, after having served almost 21 years in the New York State prison system.

Staci Dupont, Community Impact Honoree
*Social Justice Activist and Wife of Dominic Dupont of
Raised in the System*



Pro Bono Promoters

Students who are leaders and organizers at Cardozo, facilitating pro bono opportunities for themselves and other students. They help make public service a way of life at Cardozo.

**Naomi Gallimore, Pro Bono Promoter
Pro Bono Scholar**



Naomi is 2020 graduate from Cardozo and was a Pro Bono Scholar at Legal Services NYC in 2020. While at Cardozo, Naomi participated in the NYC Bar Association Diversity Fellowship Program and was placed at Bloomberg, where she focused on transactional work and various pro bono projects, including helping individuals with naturalization applications and drafting agreements for small entrepreneurs.

Prior to law school, Naomi worked at Balestriere Fariello, a small business litigation firm. She graduated from Boston College with a B.A. in Sociology and Pre-Law.

Brandon is a 2020 graduate from Cardozo Law. He is extremely grateful to have had the privilege to work with the Innocence Project and Criminal Defense Clinic in his time as a law student. He is slated to begin work in the fall as a public defender.

Brandon Kronstat, Pro Bono Promoter

*Pro Bono Scholar &
Courtroom Advocates Project*



Claire Mooney, Pro Bono Promoter

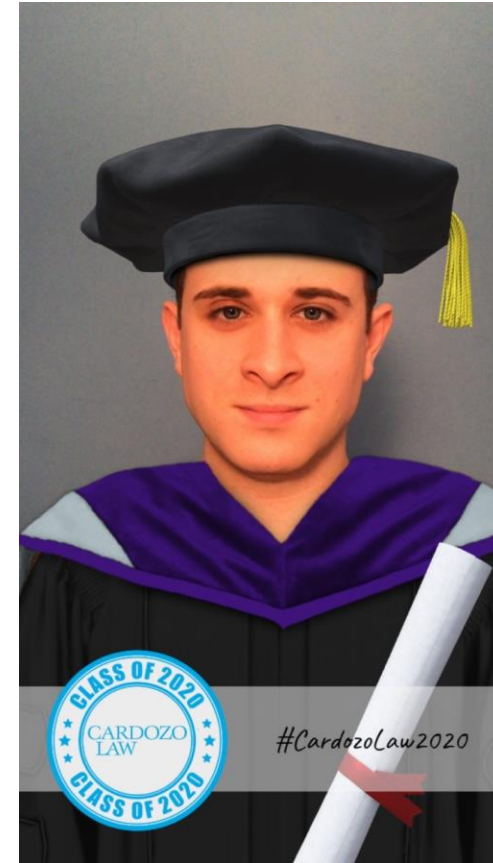
Pro Bono Scholar



Claire is a 2020 graduate from Cardozo and was a Pro Bono Scholar at Sanctuary for Families in 2020. While at Cardozo, she has focused on consumer law and advocacy for survivors of trauma, including through participation in the Consumer Rights Clinic, the Human Rights and Atrocity Prevention Clinic, the Uncontested Divorce Project, and the Courtroom Advocates Project.

Prior to law school, Claire worked at Cleary Gottlieb, Everytown for Gun Safety, and Starr Companies. In each of these roles she assisted with project coordination, legal and regulatory research, and drafting filings. She graduated from Marist College with a B.A. in Political Science and a Paralegal Certificate.

Matthew Shapiro, Pro Bono Promoter
Pro Bono Scholar



Matthew is a 2020 graduate of Cardozo Law School. He has a background in accounting and a concentration in tax law, and he will be starting his legal career at PwC this summer. This semester Matthew was a Pro Bono Scholar placed with Lawyers Alliance of New York. He is also a prolific juggler!

Destinee Salomon, Pro Bono Promoter

Pro Bono Scholar



Destinee is a 2020 graduate of Cardozo Law School. She spent the spring semester of her 3L year as a Pro Bono Scholar with the New York Legal Assistance Group's Special Litigation Unit. While at Cardozo, Destinee also participated in the Civil Rights Clinic, where she focused on prisoners' rights litigation.

Destinee graduated from Stony Brook University with a B.A. in Psychology and in Political Science.

Brigette Merzel, Pro Bono Promoter

Courtroom Advocates Project

Brigette is a 2020 graduate from Cardozo and is passionate about juvenile justice, child welfare, and children's rights!

Brigette knew she wanted to go into family law and child welfare since she was a junior in college. During her junior year,

Brigette interned at the Bronx Family Court with the Honorable Alma Gomez. Following that path and throughout her time at Cardozo, Brigette has interned at The Legal Aid Society's Juvenile Rights Practice, The Bronx Defenders Family Defense Practice, New York County Defenders Services, Lawyers for Children, and Sanctuary for Families. Brigette has also served as the Coordinator of the Courtroom Advocates Project for the last two years. These invaluable experiences have taught her the importance of compassionate and zealous advocacy. In the fall, Brigette will be joining the Administration for Children's Services as a full-time agency attorney!



Clare Haugh, Pro Bono Promoter

Courtroom Advocates Project



Clare is a rising 3L at Cardozo who is passionate about criminal justice reform, prisoners' rights, and access to legal services. Clare serves as a Cardozo Law Coordinator for the Courtroom Advocates Project, an organization through which law students counsel and represent domestic violence survivors, pro bono, in Family Court. This organization provides important cultural competency training to all student participants. Clare spent her 2L year as a clinical student with the Innocence Project, is spending her summer after 2L year engaging in capital habeas work at the Phillips Black Project, and looks forward to joining the Cardozo Civil Rights Clinic during her 3L year.

Jenny is a Cardozo Law 2020 graduate. In the past three years, Jenny has dedicated herself to assisting low-income communities and advocating for workers' rights. In the first two years of law school, she began representing low-income students at their suspension hearings through the Suspension Representation Project, and she later became the President of the student group. She also participated in the Unemployment Action Center, where represented workers who were wrongfully terminated by their employers. In the summer after her 1L year, she discovered her interest in public interest litigation at CAMBA Legal Services' Housing Unit, where she observed the inhumane treatment of tenants by landlords threatening eviction, refusing to make critical repairs, and violating tenants' other rights. As a 2L, she honed her litigation skills through writing briefs, examining witnesses, and visiting the homes of socioeconomically disadvantaged elderly and disabled persons at Bet Tzedek Civil Litigation Clinic. In the summer after her 2L year, she won the Peggy Browning Fellowship, a prestigious fellowship that allowed her to continue to represent over a dozen workers at their unemployment insurance hearings with The Workers Defense League. As a 3L, she became a law clerk for Levy Ratner, P.C., a prominent labor law firm that represents unions and individual workers, where she furthered her knowledge in labor organizing and union-side arbitration and litigation. In the same year, she published her Note with the Cardozo Journal of Equal Rights and Social Justice (of which she was the Senior Articles Editor), which explored the effects of outsourcing on workers and critiqued neoliberal so-called "solutions" that reinforce labor violations in garment factories of Bangladesh. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, she drafted a legal memorandum regarding labor protections for workers needing protective equipment under the Occupational Safety and Health Act for People's Parity Project. Additionally, as a volunteer for the newly established UAC Hotline that will continue to operate through the summer of 2020, Jenny answers claimants' calls regarding their unemployment claims.

Jenny Lam, Pro Bono Promoter
Suspension Representation Project



Anne Bredin, Pro Bono Promoter

Unemployment Action Center



Anne is a rising 3L at Cardozo and is committed to positively impacting and protecting workers' rights. Prior to attending Cardozo, Anne worked full-time in art logistics where she came to appreciate firsthand the value of each worker in an organization, no matter their position or role. Anne is currently the President of the Cardozo Chapter of the Unemployment Action Center. During her time at Cardozo, she has interned at the National Labor Relations Board, New York City Law Department's Labor and Employment division, and the union-side Labor and Employment firm, Cohen, Weiss and Simon LLP.

Christopher “C.J.” Junior is a rising 3L at Cardozo and is passionate about working with children and families. Before coming to Cardozo, C.J. worked as an elementary school teacher in New Orleans and in New York City. C.J. has dedicated his time in school to juvenile and family defense, working with The Legal Aid Society, The Bronx Defenders, and Mobilization for Justice to ensure children and families have access to free and meaningful representation. C.J. will continue that work in the Family Defense Practice of Neighborhood Defender Services of Harlem this summer. He is proud to have helped in the re-founding of the Public Interest Law Student Association here at Cardozo in addition to serving as the Vice President of the Unemployment Action Center, providing two unique opportunities for students to get involved in public interest on campus.

Christopher Junior, Pro Bono Promoter

Unemployment Action Center



Stephanie Morales, Pro Bono Promoter
Uncontested Divorce Project



Stephanie is a rising 3L at Cardozo. As a queer, Latinx woman and native New Yorker, Stephanie is committed to providing access to justice for marginalized communities. During her time at Cardozo, Stephanie has advocated on behalf of survivors of domestic violence (Uncontested Divorce Project), indigent New Yorkers (Urban Justice Center – Safety Net Project), and death row inmates (Cardozo Civil Rights Clinic). Stephanie is also committed to criminal justice reform and is on the junior board of the Women’s Prison Association. This summer, she will be working with the Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Southern District of Texas, focusing primarily on criminal and immigration matters.

Why public service matters to Stephanie: Public service allows me to use my unique privilege as a lawyer-in-training to lift and center the voices and needs of the most vulnerable in our community and advocate on their behalf.

Community Impact Student Awards

Current students recognized by fellow students
for their commitment to public service.

Aaron is a rising 2L at Cardozo. Prior to matriculating at Cardozo, Aaron worked as a double-decker tour guide where he organized his workplace to gain recognition with the Transit Workers Union, Local 100. After serving as a Shop Steward, he studied labor at the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies and worked for the Joint Board of New York and New Jersey, representing Duane Reade employees in their contract campaign with Walgreens. At Cardozo, Aaron participates in the Unemployment Action Center, Uncontested Divorce Project, and Courtroom Advocates Project. This summer, Aaron is interning with The National Center for Law and Economic Justice.

Aaron Friedman, Community Impact Award



Shaul Sultan, Community Impact Award



Shaul is a rising 2L at Cardozo and an active member of a large Syrian community in Brooklyn. Ever since his graduation from high school, Shaul has dedicated himself to helping children who come from broken homes. Shaul has put his heart and soul into assisting the widows and orphans of his community. Shaul oversaw a big brother/sister program, where he would make sure that these children were receiving the emotional support that they were lacking. Additionally, Shaul has been very active in fundraising to help children with cancer and has been involved in raising over \$10 million for this cause.

Elan Stiberman is a rising 3L at Cardozo and is passionate about advocating for Israel and the Jewish people. This past summer, Elan interned at the International Legal Forum, a Tel-Aviv based nonprofit on the vanguard of the global fight against terror, anti-Semitism, and the delegitimization of Israel and the Jewish people. During this time, he conducted legal research instrumental in enabling legal action against a terror proxy and proposed an initiative to expand a standardized working definition of anti-Semitism in Latin America. Currently, Elan is interning at the New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board.

Elan Stiberman, Community Impact Award



Tziona Breitbart, Community Impact Award



Tziona is a rising 3L at Cardozo and is passionate about ensuring the legal rights of low-income individuals and defending the rights of juveniles. Prior to attending Cardozo, Tziona worked as the Volunteer Coordinator at Covenant House New York, an organization that services youth suffering from homelessness and trafficking. She has also participated in Covenant House's Sleep Out four times in order to spread awareness about youth homelessness, and in high school started an annual fundraiser that helped serve children in need. This summer, Tziona will be working in the family defense unit at Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem.

Corey is a 2020 graduate from Cardozo, a Public Service Scholar, and an Article Editor for Cardozo's Law Review. Corey began his journey into public service as a judicial intern for the Kings County Supreme Court in Brooklyn. In the summer of his first year at Cardozo, Corey served as a judicial intern to former Chief Judge Jose L. Linares in the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey. In his second year, Corey combined his passions for public service and employment law as a clinical intern for Cardozo's Bet Tzedek Civil Litigation Clinic. At the clinic, he litigated a disability-based employment-discrimination federal claim on behalf of a marine corps veteran against the New York City Fire Department, which ultimately settled for \$105,000. This year, Corey worked as an extern for the U.S.

Department of Labor's Office of the Solicitor, and he is currently an international arbitration intern for Dentons. After graduation, Corey will go on to serve as an Assistant Corporation Counsel for the New York City Law Department's Labor and Employment Division.

Corey Hirsch, Community Impact Award



Brigette Merzel, Community Impact Award



Brigette is a 2020 graduate from Cardozo and is passionate about juvenile justice, child welfare, and children's rights! Brigette knew she wanted to go into family law and child welfare since she was a junior in college. During her junior year, Brigette interned at the Bronx Family Court with the Honorable Alma Gomez. Following that path and throughout her time at Cardozo, Brigette has interned at The Legal Aid Society's Juvenile Rights Practice, The Bronx Defenders Family Defense Practice, New York County Defenders Services, Lawyers for Children, and Sanctuary for Families. Brigette has also served as the Coordinator of the Courtroom Advocates Project for the last two years. These invaluable experiences have taught her the importance of compassionate and zealous advocacy. In the fall, Brigette will be joining the Administration for Children's Services as a full-time agency attorney!

Gamechanger Awards

Graduating students who are gamechangers in their fields. Bold, committed, and hard-working, they have already made a substantial impact in the public service sector.

Nolberto Zubia, Gamechanger Award



Nolberto Martínez Zubía III is a 2020 graduate from Cardozo. He participated in the Immigration Justice Clinic and the Criminal Defense Clinic. During his time at Cardozo, Nolberto interned at the Human Rights Watch headquarters in New York, Alef-Act for Human Rights in Beirut, and the Southern Africa Litigation Centre in Johannesburg. After his 2L year, Nolberto did a summer study abroad program at Renmin University of China in Beijing. During his final year at Cardozo, Nolberto co-led the Public Service Scholars program. Before attending Cardozo, Nolberto worked at the Bronx Defenders and completed a fellowship at the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative.

Judy Dahl is a 2020 graduate from Cardozo, a staff editor of its Equal Rights and Social Justice Journal, a Public Service Scholar, and a David Berg Public Service Fellow. She planned and led Cardozo's Public Interest Law Advocacy Week (P*LAW) and its INSPIRE! Awards programs in 2019, along with planning a P*LAW panel discussion regarding U.S. efforts to ban LGBT conversion therapy. In 2018 she planned and moderated a P*Law panel on LGBT Youth and Homelessness. Judy is currently interning at the Appellate Division First Department in Justice Dianne Renwick's chambers. During the fall semester she interned at CAMBA Legal Services and this past summer she worked in Legal Aid Society's Civil Practice, helping both organizations represent indigent consumers fighting predatory creditors. She participated in Cardozo's year-long Bet Tzedek Civil Litigation Clinic during 2018 and 2019, representing low-income clients with disabilities. Prior to law school, Judy volunteered at the Ali Forney Center for homeless LGBT youth and worked with the Credit Union National Association for many years, supporting nonprofit credit unions as they provided financial education and offered affordable financial services to low-income consumers, including helping them escape crushing debt.

Judy Dahl, Gamechanger Award



Johnny Thach, Gamechanger Award



Johnny is a 2020 graduate from Cardozo. He has committed all his life to public service, advocating for social justice and the civil rights of underrepresented and vulnerable individuals, including low-income immigrants, older adults, and people with disabilities. For years he has worked to address discrimination and abuse at multiple civil legal aid organizations and clinics, including Cardozo's Bet Tzedek Civil Litigation Clinic, Legal Services NYC, Mobilization for Justice, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, and U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. He continues to volunteer his time to pro bono and volunteer work at community legal clinics with the Asian American Bar Association, representing gender violence victims with the Courtroom Advocates Project, and helping parole applicants with the Parole Preparation Project.

Matt is a 2020 graduate from Cardozo. He began his law school career at Cardozo by joining the Suspension Representation Project, where he advocated on behalf of NYC public school students who faced suspension and expulsion in administrative hearings. During his 1L summer and 2L year, Matt took part in the Innocence Project Clinic, where he assisted in the representation of incarcerated individuals challenging their criminal convictions with claims of actual innocence in both State and Federal Court. While a full-time clinic student at the Innocence Project, Matt also interned part-time with the Legal Aid, Homeless Rights Project, and assisted in the representation of homeless New Yorkers facing challenges in the municipal shelter system. Matt spent the next summer in New Orleans interning with the Orleans Public Defenders. He assisted in the direct representation of indigent defendants facing misdemeanor and felony charges and assisted the Strategic Litigation department in drafting challenges to Louisiana statutes and procedures.

Matthew Christiana, Gamechanger Award



The graphic features a white central area with a background pattern of faint, light-colored squares and rectangles. This central area is framed by four large, overlapping triangular shapes: a green triangle in the top-left, a blue triangle in the top-right, a blue triangle in the bottom-left, and an orange triangle in the bottom-right. The text is centered in the white area.

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