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Roger Williams University School of Law

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Dean Logan's Blog

Public Interest Students Received Accolades this Summer

Posted by David Logan on 09/15/2009 at 12:00 AM

As you may remember from a previous blog (“Experiential Learning,” June 23, 2009), twenty-eight RWU Law students were awarded Feinsein Institute Summer Stipends (ranging from \$2500 to \$3500) to enable them to work in the public sector, and eight more received grants from the [Equal Justice Works Summer Corps](#). I am confident that they all had great experiences, implementing the lessons of the classroom, but three received prestigious awards that deserve special mention.

Jennifer Coliflores ('11) was chosen for Providence Mayor David Cicilline's summer fellowship program. (The Mayor has served as a member of our Adjunct Faculty.) Jen worked in the Providence Law Department for City Solicitor Joseph M. Fernandez (also a terrific supporter of RWU Law over the years). Jennifer said: *“While working in the Solicitor's Office, I had a wide variety of experience in the many different areas of municipal law. In addition to responding to the assigning attorneys, I did a substantial amount of drafting, specifically complaints, easements, leases, and motions. I also observed and did trial preparation for a tort case in the United States District Court. One of the highlights of the internship was participating in the 77th Annual Meeting of the United States Conference of Mayors, which was held for the first time in Providence.”* A 2006 graduate of Colby College, Jennifer had several internships with politicians in both Boston and Maine before enrolling at RWU Law. This year, Jennifer is the 2L representative to the Student Bar Association and the co-chair of the Public Interest Auction, and in her spare time, she is also the Co-Executive Director of the Massachusetts Youth Leadership Foundation, an organization dedicated to empowering youth leadership.

Working for the ACLU Voting Rights Project in Atlanta, Sarah Mazzochi ('10) was one of only two recipients nationwide of the “Ms. JD Public Interest Summer Scholarship.” Ms. JD chose Sarah for her commitment to public interest law based on her work, academic record, and life story. [Sarah's winning essay](#) is posted on the Ms. JD website. In Sarah's words, *“Working for the ACLU Voting Rights Project was an amazing experience. I learned what it really meant to bring constitutional challenges to court. Being in an office that regularly has cases before the United States Supreme Court made me feel like, although I was only there one summer, that I was part of something much bigger.”* Sarah, who graduated from Brown in 2006, is president of our Law Students for Reproductive Justice, the Executive Articles Editor of the Ashburn Institute Transnational Law Journal, and a member of Jessup International Law

Moot Court Team. She is also the co-chair and co-author of the ACLU Rhode Island Prisoners' Rights Handbook for '08-09.

Not only did Heather O'Connor ('11) receive a Massachusetts Bar Foundation Fellowship, but she was selected as one of nine students from a pool of 400 across the country to receive a Summer Corps Standout Award. Heather worked at South Coastal Counties Legal Services in Fall River, MA, in the Homelessness Prevention Project. Heather's experiences are detailed in [a post on the Equal Justice Works Blog](#). Her work was also featured in the Fall River paper, which included [a video on their website](#). After an eight-year career as a professional figure skater, Heather, a mother of three children, graduated 1st in her class at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, is in our Honors Program and was recently selected for the [Law Review](#).

Congratulations to all of the public interest stars!