

1-30-2015

Champions For Justice & Public Interest Auction 2015

Roger Williams University School of Law

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EVENING PROGRAM

Reception and Dinner

5:00–7:00 p.m.

A new event to shine a light on RWU Law students and alumni and celebrate their dedication to serving low-income and disenfranchised communities in New England and around the country. We will recognize the impact and applaud the accomplishments of our 2015 Champions for Justice award recipients.

Public Interest Law Auction

7:00–9:00 p.m.

An annual tradition bringing together the Bench and Bar to support the good work of RWU Law students and to raise funds to expand and enhance public interest legal service.

To view the auction items (starting January 2, 2015) visit:

www.bidpal.net/Champions2015

To purchase dinner and auction tickets visit:

<http://lawalumni.rwu.edu/champions2015>

Proceeds from the evening will benefit the many social justice programs within RWU Law:

Public Interest Summer Stipends

Alternative Spring Break

Public Interest Externships

Pro Bono Collaborative

RWU Law Clinics

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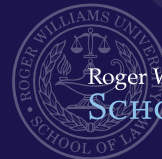
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2015 Event Committee

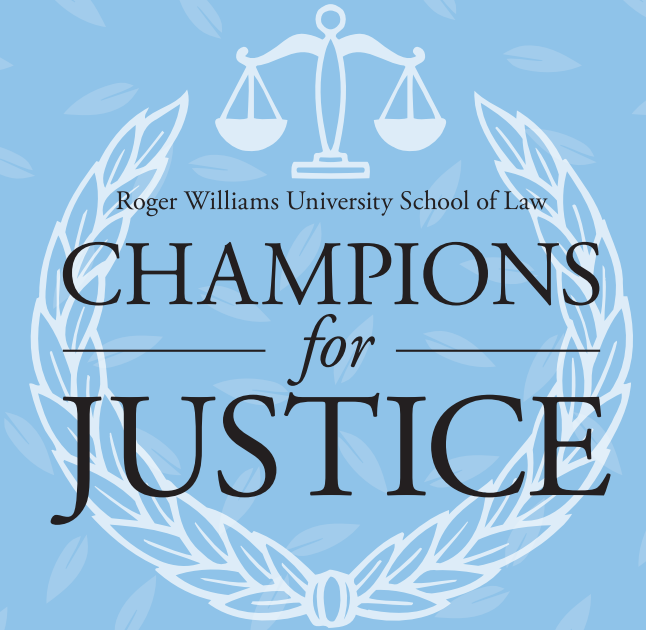
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Roger Williams University
SCHOOL OF LAW



Please join us for a special evening
to celebrate and support the students, alumni, partners
and friends whose exceptional devotion to social justice
increases access to justice for all.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2015
PROVIDENCE BILTMORE HOTEL

HONOR THE 2015 CHAMPIONS...



2015 CHAMPION FOR JUSTICE

LINN FOSTER FREEDMAN

Attorney Linn Foster Freedman is an expert in health care law, privacy and security law and complex litigation. She is a partner and leader of the Privacy and Data Protection group as well as the HIPAA Compliance group at Nixon Peabody LLP, where she advises healthcare providers. In addition to her considerable professional prowess, Linn has devoted tremendous time and energy advocating for access to justice in Rhode Island. She introduced Nixon Peabody LLP to the Pro Bono Collaborative (PBC) and oversees the firm's provision of pro bono legal assistance to those served by the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless. Linn serves on the PBC Advisory Board and Annual Event Host Committee. She initiated the creation of an ad hoc Access to Justice working group of attorneys and now serves on the Rhode Island Supreme Court's Access to Justice Commission, established in 2014. Linn serves on the Roger Williams University Board of Trustees and the Roger Williams University School of Law Board of Directors.



COMMUNITY PARTNER CHAMPION

COMMITTEE FOR PUBLIC COUNSEL SERVICES (CPCS)

The Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS) houses not only the Public Defender Division, which is the statewide public defender for Massachusetts, but also the Youth Advocacy Division, the Children and Family Law Division, and the Mental Health Litigation Division. Lawyers in the Fall River and New Bedford Public Defender Division offices have been mentoring RWU Law students – and hiring RWU Law graduates – for over a decade. In addition to robust participation in RWU Law's Externship Program, the Public Defender Division in Fall River has hosted RWU Law students for Alternative Spring Break for the past two years. This year, students will be hosted by both the New Bedford and Fall River offices for an immersive spring break experience. Many students have had externships in both the Youth Advocacy Division and the Children and Family Law Division, and students have participated in externships in Southeastern Massachusetts as well as in Boston, Brockton, Northampton, Roxbury, and Worcester.



ALUMNI PUBLIC INTEREST CHAMPION

DEBORAH GONZALEZ

Attorney Deborah “Debbie” Gonzalez specializes in immigration law, family law, divorce, child custody and child support issues at her practice, Gonzalez Law Offices Inc. Debbie has dedicated her entire career to the service of others. As a law student, she was a standout in the Criminal Defense Clinic and upon graduation began her tireless work with the local immigrant community. Debbie has been an active volunteer in the Pro Bono Collaborative and its recent efforts to assist unaccompanied immigrant children. Of Brazilian heritage, Debbie volunteers her time with the mobile Brazilian Embassy when they travel to Rhode Island. She also founded The Brazilian Information Center in 2008, an organization that provides the Brazilian and Portuguese communities with legal information. Debbie is a 2004 graduate of Roger Williams University and a 2007 graduate of Roger Williams University School of Law. She was a Visiting Assistant Professor and Acting Director of the Immigration Law Clinic from 2012 to 2014.



Roger Williams University School of Law

CHAMPIONS
for
JUSTICE

A special evening to celebrate and support
the students, alumni, partners and friends
whose exceptional devotion to social justice
increases access to justice for all.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2015

PROVIDENCE BILTMORE HOTEL

WELCOME!

Welcome to the School of Law's inaugural ***Champions for Justice*** dinner. Tonight we honor three *Champions* – Linn Foster Freedman, Deborah Gonzalez, and the Committee for Public Counsel Services – and celebrate all of those who generously support the School of Law's commitment to experiential education and pro bono service.

The Feinstein Center for Pro Bono and Experiential Education and the School of Law's in-house clinics connect students to communities in need. This public interest programming provides students with practical experience, but it also cultivates a pro bono ethic in our students, who make Rhode Island and the world a better place during and after law school. We are indebted to the lawyers and judges who model that ethic and mentor our students. The programs we celebrate tonight include:

- **Pro Bono Graduation Requirement**
- **Providence Legal Clinics**
- **Public Interest Externships**
- **Pro Bono Collaborative**
- **Alternative Spring Break**
- **Summer Stipends**
- **Public Interest Loan Repayment**

Tonight's event will raise funds to support these programs that have made the School of Law a leader in experiential education and pro bono service and that have increased access to justice to the members of our community most in need.

We are so grateful for your support.

Laurie Barron

Executive Director, Feinstein Center for Pro Bono & Experiential Education

Andrew Horwitz

Assistant Dean for Experiential Education, Director of Clinical Programs, and Professor of Law

Michael J. Yelnosky

Dean and Professor of Law

EVENING PROGRAM

Welcome

Dean Michael J. Yelnosky

Opening Remarks

The Honorable William E. Smith
Chief Judge, U.S. District Court for the District of Rhode Island
Chair, RWU Law Board of Directors

Champions for Justice Awards Presentation

Alumni Public Interest Champion

*Presented by Andrew Horwitz
Assistant Dean for Experiential Education
Deborah Gonzalez, Esq. '07*

Community Partner Champion

*Presented by Laurie Barron
Executive Director, Feinstein Center for Pro Bono & Experiential Education
Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS)*

2015 Champion for Justice

*Presented by President Donald J. Farish, Ph.D., J.D.
Linn Foster Freedman, Esq.*

Video Presentation

The Champions: Advocacy in Action

Closing Remarks

Dean Michael J. Yelnosky

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We are proud to honor the *2015 Champions for Justice* award recipients – Linn Foster Freedman, Deborah Gonzalez and the Committee for Public Counsel Service – and their devotion to ensuring that quality legal services are available to the neediest populations.

You inspire us with your passionate example.

Congratulations!

Mark Mandell, Michael Schwartz & Yvette Boisclair

“It’s so important that we teach our law students the importance of pro bono work – because when you pay attention to an issue, its magnitude, the number of students involved, and the amount of time people invest in it will always increase.”

*Mark Mandell, Esq.
Trustee, Roger Williams University
Chair Emeritus, RWU Law Board of Directors
Founding Donor, Pro Bono Collaborative*



MAKING

A

DIFFERENCE

LINN FOSTER FREEDMAN, PARTNER, NIXON PEABODY LLP

Congratulations to our colleague, **Linn Foster Freedman**, on receiving the 2015 Champion for Justice Recognition. We value the tremendous time and energy Linn has devoted to advocating for access to justice in Rhode Island.



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CONGRATULATIONS

Hinckley Allen applauds the
2015 Champions for Justice
award recipients.

Attorneys at Law – serving Rhode Island
from our office at:

50 Kennedy Plaza, Suite 1500, Providence, RI 02903
401-274-2000



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RWU Law salutes
Mr. Alan Shawn Feinstein

for his founding and
transformational support of the
Feinstein Center for Pro Bono
and Experiential Education.

—•••••—
*On behalf of the students and
alumni of RWU Law,
thank you for the difference you
have made for our community!*



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DEBORAH GONZALEZ, ESQ. '07



ALUMNI PUBLIC INTEREST CHAMPION

Attorney Deborah “Debbie” Gonzalez specializes in immigration law and family law at her practice, Gonzalez Law Offices, Inc. Debbie has dedicated her entire career to the service of others. As a law student, she was a standout in the Criminal Defense Clinic and upon graduation she began her tireless work with the local immigrant community. Debbie has been an active volunteer in the Pro Bono Collaborative and its recent efforts to assist unaccompanied immigrant children. Most recently she was among four pro bono attorneys who assisted 30 families at a legal clinic in Central Falls, Rhode Island, counseling them on their legal rights. Of Brazilian heritage, Debbie volunteers her time with the mobile Brazilian Embassy when it travels to Rhode Island. She also founded The Brazilian Information Center in 2008, an organization that provides the local Brazilian and Portuguese communities with legal information. Debbie is a 2004 graduate of Roger Williams University and a 2007 graduate of Roger Williams University School of Law. She was a Visiting Assistant Professor and Acting Director of the Immigration Law Clinic from 2012 to 2014. During her time with the clinic, Debbie’s steady hand and inspired teaching served the students and the clients exceptionally well, at the same time enhancing the clinic’s reputation in the community and with the courts. Her work is driven by her dedication to justice, fair treatment, and human dignity. She is an inspiration to all who have the pleasure of working with her.

COMMITTEE FOR PUBLIC COUNSEL SERVICES (CPCS)



COMMUNITY PARTNER CHAMPION

The Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS) is the Massachusetts state agency responsible for providing legal services to indigent clients in civil and criminal matters where there is a state or federal mandate that counsel be provided. CPCS is committed to protecting the fundamental constitutional and human rights of its clients by providing zealous advocacy, community-oriented defense, and excellent representation. CPCS is dedicated to building a strong professional relationship with each of their clients, to understanding their diverse circumstance, and to meeting their needs. Lawyers in the Fall River and New Bedford Public Defender Division have been mentoring RWU Law Students – and hiring RWU Law graduates – for over a decade. Many students have also had externships in CPCS's Youth Advocacy Division and the Children and Family Law Division. In addition to robust participation in our Externship Program, the Public Defender Division in Fall River has hosted RWU Law students for Alternative Spring Break for the past two years. This year, our students will also be hosted by the New Bedford office for an immersive spring break experience. We are grateful to CPCS for its commitment to our students, for providing them with such excellent supervision and mentoring, and for teaching them what it means to be a zealous advocate for the underrepresented.

LINN FOSTER FREEDMAN, ESQ.



2015 CHAMPION FOR JUSTICE

Attorney Linn Foster Freedman is an expert in health care law, privacy and security law and complex litigation. She is a partner and leader of the Privacy and Data Protection group as well as the HIPAA Compliance group and Health Information Technology team at Nixon Peabody LLP, where she advises healthcare providers. She serves as general counsel for the Rhode Island Quality Institute, a non-profit improving the quality of healthcare in Rhode Island. In addition to her considerable professional prowess, Linn has devoted tremendous time and energy advocating for access to justice in Rhode Island. She introduced Nixon Peabody LLP to the Pro Bono Collaborative (PBC) and oversees the firm's provision of pro bono legal assistance to those served by the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless who have minor expungeable criminal records that have prevented them from finding safe housing and work. Linn serves on the PBC Advisory Board and Annual Event Host Committee. She initiated the creation of an ad hoc Access to Justice working group of attorneys and now serves on the Rhode Island Supreme Court's Access to Justice Commission, established in 2014. Linn's impact in the community extends beyond the legal sector as she serves on the advisory board of the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship New England and is president of the Foundation for Rhode Island Day School, in addition to other local boards. She was named by *Providence Business News* as an "Exceptional Woman" from Rhode Island and *Directors & Boards* named her to their 2014 "Directors to Watch" class. Linn serves on the Roger Williams University Board of Trustees and the Roger Williams University School of Law Board of Directors. As a leader in the Rhode Island access to justice movement, Linn has motivated and energized her peers in the legal community to work toward making access to justice a reality. RWU Law is honored and proud to serve alongside Linn in the pursuit of justice.

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WHAT RWU LAW STUDENTS SAY ABOUT THEIR PUBLIC INTEREST EXPERIENCES...

RITA E. NERNEY (SECOND YEAR)

**Hometown: New Bedford, MA
Committee for Public Counsel Services, Fall River, MA**

"Through my work with the Medical-Legal Partnership, I learned how desperately Rhode Island needs good attorneys committed to pro bono work, whether that be in a career or as dedicated volunteers. I witnessed clients' appreciation when we were able to provide them with any assistance, even if their legal outcome was not always the best. Also, I learned how RWU Law is effectively training law students to provide pro bono assistance in school and in future careers. I am very grateful for the partnership RWU Law continues to form in the community to strengthen opportunities for needed pro bono services throughout the State."

BIENVENIDO PEREZ, JR. (THIRD YEAR)

**Hometown: New Bedford, MA
Amos House Homeless Legal Clinic, Providence, RI**

"It is no secret to anybody who knows me that I am a huge Batman fan. Batman, when he was a child, suffered criminal tragedy that sparked him to launch a crusade against those who destroy family, community and society. When I was a child, my family was evicted and then homeless. We had no lawyer, advocate or Batman of our own. The law school and The Feinstein Center have equipped me with the skills and opportunities to ensure that I can be Batman for children so that they don't experience what I did."

ALYSSA A. GOLDEN (THIRD YEAR)

**Hometown: Asheville, NC
Committee for Public Counsel Services, Fall River, MA**

"I began studying law at RWU Law knowing that I wanted to use my legal education as a tool to continue fighting against oppression in my community. Completing an externship at CPCS-Fall River solidified my decision to dedicate myself to working as a public defender. I had the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in a variety of cases and to work on developing my skills as a zealous advocate for my clients. I developed these skills with the help of incredibly dedicated and skilled CPCS attorneys who are also amazing mentors. It was an invaluable and inspiring experience that I will carry with me throughout my career."

ELAINE ASTORGA (THIRD YEAR)

Hometown: Culver City, CA
Public Counsel, Los Angeles, CA

"I came to law school to help people, but when I started I didn't know exactly how to accomplish this, or what area I was most interested in. RWU Law has given me multiple opportunities to find my true passion. Working with Public Counsel, I have been able to give back to my community by providing legal representation to those who need it the most."

BRETT BEAUBIEN (SECOND YEAR)

Hometown: Woonsocket, RI
Defense Institute of International Legal Studies, Newport, RI

"My ability to pursue public interest work has been on a fast track since arriving at RWU Law. I've been able to do just what I came to law school to do: fight for those unable to fight for themselves. My experience at RWU Law is preparing me to be an effective advocate and litigator."

KELLEY NOBRIGA (SECOND YEAR)

Hometown: New Bedford, MA
Committee for Public Counsel Services, Fall River, MA

"Pro bono experiences are the best way to explore new interests and expand on certain passions. The ability to become familiar with different legal concepts and advocacy skills enhance the law school experience while also providing an opportunity to feel engaged in the community. I recommend exploring these opportunities by making time during law school to step out of the classroom and into new experiences for a different perspective on your legal education."

ANTHONY SINAPI (THIRD YEAR)

Hometown: Warwick, RI
Operation Stand Down RI, Cumberland, RI

"I have enjoyed my pro bono experiences because they have given me the opportunity to help people who may not have otherwise had access to legal advice. Not only have I been able to expand upon my professional skill set as a result, but I also have been able to access a network of people that I may have otherwise never encountered in my chosen field of focus."

WHAT RWU ALUMNI SAY ABOUT THEIR PUBLIC INTEREST CAREERS...

KIM AHERN, ESQ. '09

Employer: Rhode Island Office of Attorney General, Providence, RI

Kim is a special assistant attorney general who started in the juvenile prosecution unit. Currently she prosecutes felony-level crimes and advocates for victims in the domestic violence and sexual assault unit.

“Ever since I was a young child, I knew that I wanted to do public interest work. It wasn’t until I got to RWU Law and was introduced to the Feinstein Center that I realized how I could serve the public with a law degree through government service. I’m thankful for my time at RWU Law and how it led me to where I am today. I feel privileged to stand up for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault by serving as a prosecutor in the Office of Attorney General.”

KATHRYN CARLSON, ESQ. '11

Employer: Committee for Public Counsel Services, New Bedford, MA

Kathryn works in the Public Defender Division representing indigent defendants in all stages of criminal proceedings. She splits her time between court, client meetings and legal research.

“My work has provided me with a better understanding of what it is like to grow up and live in an impoverished area. The work is mentally and emotionally demanding, but also extremely gratifying when you are able to help those who otherwise have no one in their corner. I went to law school hoping to make a difference. I explored my options while in school, completing internships at law firms that would pay more after graduation, but after my externship in the New Bedford CPCS Office, I never looked back. The externship reminded me why I started the journey to law school. I enjoy my job through the tough days because I know that I have the chance to make a difference in my clients’ lives and in the community.”

JEANNINE CASSELMAN '09

Employer: Rhode Island Center for Law and Public Policy, Providence, RI

Jeannine is a public interest attorney with the Rhode Island Center for Law and Public Policy (RICLAPP) and program director for the Rhode Island Medical-Legal Partnership (RIMLP). The RIMLP integrates the expertise of healthcare, public health and legal professionals and staff to address and prevent health-harming social and legal needs for patients, clinics and populations. She works primarily with low income families from Providence's South and West End neighborhoods with the goal of affecting positive health outcomes by using the law as a "legal prescription."

"As a RWU Law alumna, I had the benefit of participating in an externship, a clinic, and a public stipend summer placement. These experiences were foundational towards reaching my goal of becoming a public interest attorney. The Rhode Island Center for Law and Public Policy and the RI Medical-Legal Partnership not only provided me with employment, but also an opportunity to engage in an exciting and innovative practice of public interest law. RWU Law's continued support of the RIMLP, especially through its regular placement of externs, has further bolstered my ability to develop and sustain this important program at Hasbro Children's Hospital."

DIANA DEGROOF, ESQ. '03

Employer: Rhode Island Legal Services, Inc., Providence, RI

Diana has been a staff attorney at Rhode Island Legal Services, Inc. since 2003. She represents clients in housing, public benefits and family law cases. Currently, she advocates for parents involved in the Rhode Island child welfare system in Family Court.

"For the past 11 years, RILS has benefitted from the work that RWU Law interns and externs do in our office. There is so much need and we couldn't possibly meet it without these invaluable students. I love giving back to the law school by mentoring students and encouraging them to become public interest lawyers."

CHRISTY M. DIORIO, ESQ. '11

Employer: City of Fall River Law Department, MA

Christy served as assistant corporate counsel in Fall River for three years. During this time, she worked on "Building Blocks," the neighborhood revitalization initiative, to ensure cleaner, safer, and stronger neighborhoods street by street, block by block. She ensured that vacant and abandoned properties were transformed into rehabilitated, secure housing for veterans, first time homebuyers, and responsible community investors. The City worked closely with the Office of the Attorney General to transform unsafe and uninhabitable homes into code-complaint properties, positively impacting neighborhoods.

"Together we are revitalizing neighborhoods, street by street, block by block."

LUIS F. MANCHENO, ESQ. '13

Employer: The Bronx Defenders, Bronx, NY

Luis represents detained people in removal proceedings in Immigration Court in New York. As an Immigrant Justice Corps Fellow, Luis is an advocate in New York City working to elevate the quality of legal representation of people facing removal proceedings.

"I believe in a world without borders. People have the right to choose where to live, where to raise their families, and where to thrive. Through my work representing people in removal proceedings, I fight to make this dream a reality."

ROB MOUNT, ESQ. '11

Employer: Committee for Public Counsel Services, Fall River, MA

Rob works in the Public Defender Division of CPCS representing and advising indigent defendants in Massachusetts District Court. He counsels his clients from arraignment through disposition.

"My entire practical experience is solely in indigent defense. During law school, I interned with the Rhode Island and New Jersey Offices of the Public Defender, as well as for CPCS. I enjoy the challenges of the job and I have the privilege of working with talented, intelligent, and thoughtful colleagues every day. Zealous advocacy is the embodiment of our Constitution."

WEAYONNOH NELSON-DAVIES, ESQ. '07

Employer: Central West Justice Center, Worcester, MA

Weayonnoh serves as a public benefits and Medical-Legal Partnership attorney. She represents clients on legal matters including housing, immigration, family law, public benefits, and disability issues.

"One of the great things I love about my work is that I have had the opportunity to learn so much and help my clients with many legal barriers. The experience of working together with clients and community partners is humbling and the most fulfilling feeling. Sometimes the stories of people living in poverty are unfair and ill-informed. I get to be a part of their stories, advocate and share their stories in a way that allows them to be treated with dignity. I believe that my purpose in life has always been to serve and I get to do that as a public interest attorney. RWU Law was the best fit for me because they got it and equipped me with the resources and fuel to continue to live my purpose-driven life."

RWU Law gratefully acknowledges



for its support of the 2015 Public Interest Law Auction.
This evening, eight lucky bidders will win a coupon worth
\$1,750 toward any BARBRI Bar Course worldwide!



Minimum Bid: \$600

One coupon per student only.

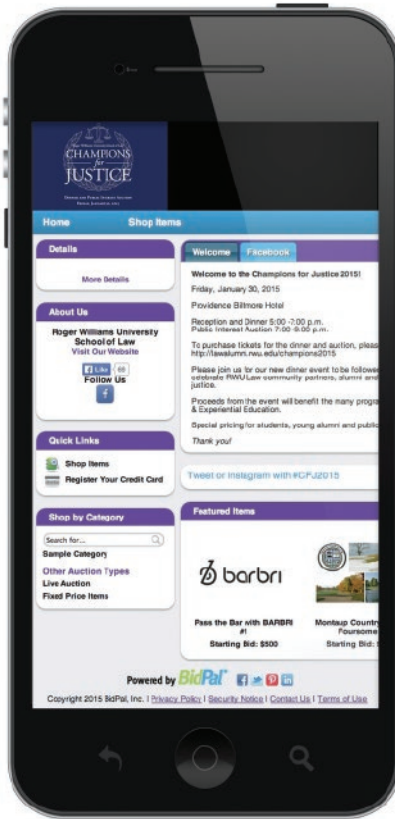
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TWITTER: #CFJ2015

Link for Auction Items – <http://www.bidpal.net/Champions2015>



To read more about the Champions for Justice event, including the award recipients, student and alumni testimonials, and RWU Law social justice programs, please visit:
<http://law.rwu.edu/calendar/champions-for-justice>

Behind the *Champions for Justice* that we are recognizing tonight are other champions who support their good works. In that spirit we wish to thank the many individuals who have devoted their time and exceptional talents to making tonight's celebration a success.

Our Generous Sponsors

For their incredible generosity and belief in the mission of RWU Law and the school's commitment to supporting access to justice, we thank the law firms, corporations and individuals who sponsored *Champions for Justice*.

Student Leaders and Volunteers

Kate Clark-Dawe '15 and Kate Gannon '15 have led a corps of students who worked over the course of several months to gather the impressive group of items we're offering at the silent and live auction, and who are assisting at tonight's events. Thank you to all of the student volunteers for your tireless efforts and dedication.

Event Committee

Members of the Event Committee have invested tremendous energy and enthusiasm in planning tonight's events; hosting donors, students and guests; and encouraging support and attendance from the legal community and beyond.

Volunteer Auctioneers

Kim Ahern '09 and James Bagley '12 are our gracious Live Auctioneers tonight and we thank them for their tenacity and wonderful support.

Faculty

We are especially grateful to Cecily Banks for negotiating all of the fabulous and creative auction items contributed by faculty. Thank you to Cecily for her persistence and to the faculty for their generosity.

Special Events

The staff in the Office of Special Events, Heidi Dagwan and Melanie Stone, have helped to shape and coordinate the many new aspects of *Champions for Justice* and have ensured the ongoing success of the APIL Auction tradition.

Law School Staff

Finally, we salute the passion and leadership of RWU Law staff who daily support the extraordinary range of programs that expand access to justice for underserved communities in Rhode Island and throughout the region.

Feinstein Center for Pro Bono & Experiential Education

Laurie Barron, J.D., M.S.W.
Executive Director

Eliza Vorenberg, J.D.,
Director, Pro Bono Collaborative and Pro Bono & Community Partnerships

Suzanne Harrington-Steppen, J.D.,
Associate Director of Pro Bono Programs

Lisa Quinn
Pro Bono Experiential Learning Coordinator

Law Clinical Programs Faculty & Staff

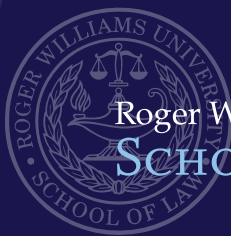
Professor Andrew Horwitz
Assistant Dean for Experiential Education

Professor Peter Margulies
Director of the Immigration Clinic

Professor Gowri Krishna
Director of the Community Economic Development Clinic

Visiting Professor Katie Ahern
Interim Director of the Community Economic Development Clinic

Margie Caranci, *Legal Administrator/Paralegal*
Barbra Supsky, *Administrative Assistant*
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