

August 2020  
Issue 24

# 2020 REGINALD C. LINDSAY AND DAVID S. NELSON FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS

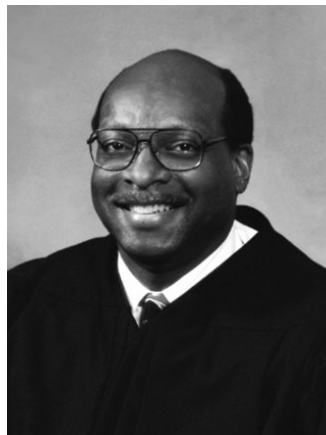


*Going into the Nelson Fellowship program, I had no idea how my summer would look. Between the COVID-19 pandemic and the civil unrest all across the globe, I started to lose sight in who I was and the plan I had for my future. The Nelson Fellowship helped me regain my sight and amplify my voice....I began to clearly unravel how I could use my presence on this earth to generate real progressive change. Even with everything going virtual, I was still able to attend eye-opening court hearings, meet inspirational people, and learn so much from my Nelson/Lindsay Fellow family.*

**- STAR IGBINOSA, 2020 Nelson Fellow**



*The legal system was always something nebulous, but I always knew that its intricacies controlled my permanence in the country I now call home. With years and years of doubts and questions in my mind about the American judicial system, the Lindsay Fellowship provided me with knowledge and clarity that I could share with my family who has survived all this uncertainty since we first moved to the states. Here we are now, understanding a system that never saw us coming. Translating legal terms to Spanish just as fluidly as the interpreters in the courtrooms. Finally, from the comfort of my home, I was able to explore 'the law' alongside my greatest cheerleaders. We belong here, we are here to stay, and we are going to change the meaning of what it looks like to "make a future in the law".*



**- SARA SARMIENTO GRADUATION SPEECH, 2020 Lindsay Fellow**

## **In this issue:**

A close-up look at the first EVER virtual Fellowship summer!

Learning about restorative justice, RISE & C.A.R.E. programs

Meeting with inspiring Fellowship alumni

Virtual class with Jason, Jamele, Alexis & Jerry

**And more!**

## Meet the Coordinators



### LEAD COORDINATOR ANNA STEFANOV

Anna is a rising senior at UMass Lowell where she is a double major in History and Business with a concentration in Management. She is a part of the International Relations Club at her university and is interested in issues regarding sustainability and community engagement.

### DEPUTY COORDINATOR KIARA BATISTA



Kiara is a junior at UMass Amherst where she double majors in Legal Studies and Portuguese. In addition, she is pursuing a translating and interpreting certificate for Cape Verdean Creole, Portuguese and Spanish. Kiara aspires to go to law school and practice immigration law in the future. She is interested in helping immigrant communities understand the justice system through litigation and interpretation. She also wants to provide language assistance to those who are often excluded from systems because of language, social, economic and other barriers.

## Meeting with Judge Ponsor Sara Sarmiento (Lindsay Fellow)

Judge Ponsor was one of the first judges we met through the Lindsay Fellowship, and definitely the first to be sitting outside of Boston -- Springfield. As the only Lindsay Fellow this year attending college in Western Massachusetts and the only one not living in Boston for the summer, I was excited to meet a judge who, like me, may not have had the opportunity to get involved with the Fellowship in a pre-pandemic world. Judge Ponsor sent us a copy of his book *The Hanging Judge* in the mail so upon our meeting we were all prepared with questions about plot, characters, and contrasts between the book's fiction and real life duties as a judge. At this point in the fellowship, zooming with judges still felt foreign and unusually formal, but by the end of this meeting I knew that the U.S. District Court was as excited to see us learn as we were.

We entered the Zoom with Judge Ponsor and each introduced ourselves, passing it on to the next Fellow in a seamless 'popcorn' style we worked hard to perfect in the first two weeks of the fellowship. In this meeting we conversed about the criminal justice and court systems from the perspectives of a judge and an author, we touched on law school and the legal profession, and we exchanged remarks on the current *unprecedented times*. However, *for me*, the most special part of our meeting with Judge Ponsor was hearing about his conviction to incorporate the art of writing and literature into a lifelong career in the law. As a young artist determined to pursue a legal career, I often worry about not being able to balance my career and personal passions. We had candid discussions about boundaries, making time for what you love, and finding the fuel in those little things to bring our best selves to the work we do.

This conversation was the first of many that I hope to have with Judge Ponsor – the law has space for all sorts of people, and you don't have to sacrifice the things that make you you in order to influence the change we want to see. Judge Ponsor also shared stories of his time and friendship with Judge Reginald C. Lindsay. These stories, along with other moments in the Fellowship, were crucial in developing our understanding of *who* Judge Lindsay was and *how* we could honor his legacy through our position as Lindsay Fellows. For his book, conversation, boundless generosity, and kindness, I would like to thank Judge Ponsor on behalf of the Lindsay Fellows.



## Jamele Adams' Public Speaking Class

*Nicolas Rodriguez (Nelson Fellow)*



Jamele Adams' class was like no other. Not only did he make a small group of students work together on Zoom, but he made us feel like we were in a safe space. In that Zoom classroom, he applied valuable teachings into every class we had. From his style of speaking to his godly beard, he is a man of great honor, as well as great randomness. In fact, our very first class he showed up with a poem of his own creation. He had such style, such logic to it, such accuracy, clearness, coherency, conciseness, with a very sufficient vibe to it.

It was so enchanting to the point where we did not know what to do but listen; listen to his tone, listen to his words, listen to the powerful meaning, listen with not our minds or ears, but with our hearts. Throughout the time in our class we learned about ways to improve our public speaking. For example, his constant push for time frames as well as his passionate fight against filler language. This stopped being a restriction but rather a motivator; each day of class I wanted to leave Jamele in awe, speechless like I had been the first day, for once. It did happen once, and that day was emotional for everyone because we all had a breakthrough.

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*“Jamele Adams enabled me to open myself up in a way I never thought possible, through writing.”*

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See, I am a person who shows no emotion, or at least tries to hold it in whenever I can; it's how I was brought up. But nonetheless, Jamele Adams enabled me to open myself up in a way I never thought possible, through writing. The assignment was to write how police brutality affects you. “I shouldn't have to deny my family from visiting” was a small part of what I had written; it brought tears to some, and it was at that moment I realized I was in a safe space. I'm with people of great support. Anything and everything will happen to you in that class, but that's just the way it is. Every day is a new day with new experiences; this class will forever change my view on life, that of others', and my own. Thank you for the time you have given the Nelson Fellows, but more importantly, for giving me the chance to open up. You truly started this class with a captivating opening, you gave us a beautiful journey throughout our time together, and you gave us all a gripping ending.

## Federal Probation Office *Ona Gjoleka (Lindsay Fellow)*

As a Lindsay Fellow, you are given three options of placements where you can spend four interactive weeks of learning with either the U.S. Attorney's Office, Federal Public Defender Office, or the U.S. Probation and Pretrial Services Office. As a Sociology major and double minor in Arabic and Art History, the choice seemed clear at first. I wanted to be part of the U.S. Attorney's Office. However, as an immigrant, the placement was rather unattainable for me and my resident status. From that point, I was not sure where to be placed hence I left the decision to the capable hands of Carolyn Meckbach who saw as a perfect fit to place me in the U.S. Probation Office. To this day, I believe her choice and my placement to have been a match made in heaven as the knowledge and the experience that I acquired was not only eye-opening but also a once in a lifetime experience.

At first, I did not know what to expect. What do Probation Officers (PO's) do? Do they simply supervise people and wait for the perfect moment where the individuals slip up so that they can arrest them and put them back to the custody of the Bureau of Prison (BoP)? Or do they simply visit the individuals on release once a month and forget about them afterwards? As it turns out, to answer my question, that is precisely what PO's do NOT do. To begin with, there are two services that PO's are involved with, court services and field services. Court services refer to the process of what happens to a client from the moment they are arrested until they are sentenced.

At first, the PO's conduct a bail report (often referred to as a "thumbnail sketch") where they gather information regarding a client's employment, residence, family ties, and so on that are relevant to determine whether that client can be detained or released until their sentencing hearing. Based on this interview, PO's then make their recommendations to the judge regarding the client. These recommendations are based on whether the client is a risk of flight, risk of non-trial appearance, or whether they are a danger to themselves or the community.





Shortly afterward, depending on whether the client is detained or released, the field officers come in the game where they supervise the clients who were released back to the community to make sure that they do not commit any new crimes and that the clients have the adequate resources to help them with their immediate needs. To prepare for the sentencing hearing, the court officers write a pre-sentence report which is best described as a book report on the client so that the judge can use it in order to have full knowledge and background on who the person that is standing in front of them is. This report includes, but is not limited to, the client's substance abuse history, mental health history, childhood, employment history, criminal history, and so on.



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Once the client has served their time or has been deemed as “time served” and is released back to the community, the field officers come in the game once more. Depending on how long the client is on supervised release, the PO's work closely with them to ensure that they are on the right path and as far away from recidivating as possible. Some of the resources and funding available to the clients include helping them obtain their GRE, CDL license, obtain a job, mentor, mental health help, substance abuse help, and/or narcotics abuse help. In addition, the PO's often refer the clients to the vast community resources that are available to them such as the Office of Returning Citizens and Inner City Weightlifting.

What I have described above is not even remotely close to a quarter of what the PO's handle and deal with in their day-to-day lives. For me to describe everything they do, I would have to have the entire newsletter dedicated only to this column. Nevertheless, I want to end and summarize this piece by emphasizing how welcomed I felt during the four weeks I was at the FPO. I feel incredibly lucky not only to have met every single officer, supervisor, and the incredible chiefs but also to have learned that being a Probation Officer is not only being an agent of law enforcement but also being a social worker, mentor, therapist, guidance counselor, and so much more. Thank you to Carolyn for this experience and thank you to every single officer for making this summer the best one of my life.

## Meeting with Doris Fitzpatrick *Anna Zhao (Nelson Fellow)*



In the midst of the global pandemic, civil unrest has come to the forefront of American society. The topic at the center of dispute is the criminal justice system. This centuries-old construct is intricate and leaves so much space for discussion and exploration. From a historical standpoint, society has viewed individuals who have committed crime as failures and burdens. However, there exist underlying implicit biases which may have gotten in the way for some men and women from being perfect law-abiding citizens. Light always comes after the darkness ends. When individuals who have been incarcerated are able to return home, the U.S. Probation Office steps in to keep them on the right track. Our class of 2020 Nelson Fellows had the opportunity to experience the justice system in a unique light.

Throughout the program we were able to meet with an array of different individuals who work in different parts of the legal profession. One of the individuals we had the opportunity to meet with was Doris Fitzpatrick, a current U.S Probation Officer and a former Nelson Fellow. She provided me with so much insight into the important work that probation officers have to perform on a daily basis. It's drastically different from what is displayed in mass media.

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From our discussion with Doris, I found out that there are many types of POs and they play many different roles within the justice system. Their jobs involve a lot more paperwork than I assumed. They have to read through an abundance of case files and get to know the individuals they have been assigned before getting to meet them in person. They assist the once-incarcerated to return to their communities. Another part of their work is providing pretrial services for court hearings. They interview defendants prior to trial and provide sentencing suggestions to judges. Probation officers are a valuable part of the justice system.

My experience with Doris was very insightful. She has opened my eyes and given me a brand new perspective of law enforcement officers. I want to thank Doris taking time out of her schedule to share her inspirational story with us. I am grateful for your honesty and vulnerability.

## Meeting with Doris Fitzpatrick PT. II *Jolina Mahabali (Nelson Fellow)*

I believe that the best things in life and the best people in life are the ones who are genuine. The ones who reveal their beauty behind the madness of this world, regardless of the fact that society may look down upon this and try to cover it up.

I have always associated the field of law with an environment that does not allow you to feel emotion. That lawyers, judges, officers are all heartless, rude, and here to dictate our world. I was honestly terrified coming into this internship. However, being a Nelson Fellow and being presented with the opportunity to converse with lawyers and judges has completely changed my perspective on law. Especially meeting the one and only, Doris Fitzpatrick.

Ms. Fitzpatrick is a probation officer, a very exceptional one at that. She expressed that the danger with being a probation officer never discouraged her. This had me in awe, mostly because I would think that being a female having to deal with all types of dangerous people would be intimidating. This started a fire in my soul; the strong willpower that she displayed spoke to me. Ms. Fitzpatrick spoke to us openly and honestly about events in her life and decisions she made about her career. I learned that it is truly acceptable and normal to fall in life as long as we get back up, dust ourselves off and make the best out of life.

I admire her strong willpower and work ethic, as well as her self-awareness. I aspire to be as strong, raw and humble as Doris Fitzpatrick is.



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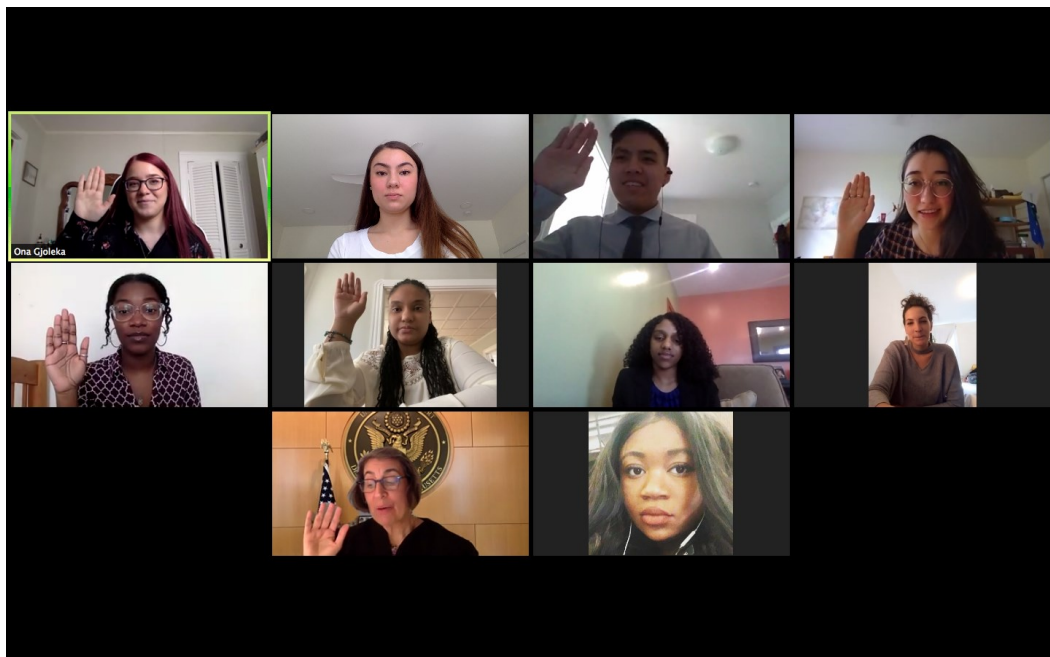
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## Court Proceedings *Shay Borden (Lindsay Fellow)*



Learning in a classroom can't compare to learning in the courtroom. Court proceedings brought the opportunity for us Fellows to sit in and watch how the judges we have come to admire applied the law. Court proceedings, though virtual, had a plethora of cases that were of diverse backgrounds and opinions. Furthermore, they were accessible for all of us to watch. As we learned about the legal system and government theories by our mentors and teachers, it was a unique opportunity to see how all of what we were discussing occurred in real time. In the current social and political climate especially, we were able to attend historical court proceedings that would help change history. It also felt empowering to see how the judges, who had mentored us and spent time speaking with us directly, further taught us as we watched them work on each case.

Although there were many sessions that I have enjoyed, there was one court proceeding that stood out to me. This summer, there was a court proceeding that involved several colleges and universities pushing back against mandates from the executive branch for its policies regarding international students. This case, being famous and well-covered in the media, was one that my cohort and I felt obliged to attend. It was especially critical to my learning and development through this program because it also occurred when I learned about how important setting and applying precedent is when arguing in court. The case itself, though anticlimactic in the end as universities and the government resolved the case outside of court, held an important message of how cases are integral to our legal system. One case can shift the tide of history and set a lasting precedent that ripples throughout every part of our society. And no matter the case, it felt like witnessing history.





## Meeting with Taisha Sturdivant *Star Igbinsa (Nelson Fellow)*

My heart is filled to the brim with gratitude and love! Going into the Nelson Fellowship program, I had no idea how my summer would look. Between the COVID-19 pandemic and the civil unrest all across the globe, I started to lose sight in who I was and the plan I had for my future. The Nelson Fellowship helped me regain my sight and amplify my voice as a young person in the nature of this world. I began to clearly unravel how I could use my presence on this earth to generate real progressive change. Even with everything going virtual, I was still able to attend eye-opening court hearings, meet inspirational people, and learn so much from my Nelson/Lindsay Fellow family. One of the most influential and memorable people I have met during my time in this program is Taisha Sturdivant.

When the other Nelson Fellows and I met with Taisha Sturdivant, she explained the hardships she went through being a youth in high school with family issues, having to struggle with her internal self, and decide what she wanted her future to consist of. Hearing her speak made me feel validated especially as a black girl with personal issues that I frankly don't talk about enough. Taisha also expanded on how she specializes in finding, improving, and protecting affordable housing for low-income communities throughout Boston. Her passion for the work she does and her overall demeanor guided me into unpacking how significant mastering a growth mindset is for my consciousness.

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I am extremely thankful for the opportunity I had to meet with Taisha Sturdivant and many other organizations/individuals who are all now a prominent mark in my worldly education.

(I would also like to add a special thanks to Judge Talwani, her law clerks, and interns for deeply including me in the processes for complex cases.)



## Civics Class with Jason Wise *Jessica Cohen (Nelson Fellow)*

Every year, the Nelson Fellows take a schedule of classes related to the law and public service alongside a public speaking class and mock trial class. The Fellows have the opportunity to take a civil rights history class with Jason Wise. In our few weeks together, Jason covered several important issues related to the concepts of identity, race and discrimination. Through the lens of the Little Rock Nine and with an emphasis on creative expression, we tackled such issues as the model minority myth, eugenics, the work of Charles Hamilton Houston, and Jim Crow segregation. This work culminated in a creative project presentation where the Fellows explored the experiences of the Little Rock Nine through skits and poetry.

Although I have discussed the civil rights movement in school, few teachers have been able to put the events of that period within the context of the modern world as effectively as Jason. With each new event we tackled, Jason encouraged us to discuss the systemic issues that led to these events. We explored these events using the creative writing of others and documentaries, giving voice to previously abstract ideas and situations. I found the writing of Jesús Colón in “Little Things are Big” especially important to my education. In his short story, Jesús Colón is having an internal battle over if he should help a struggling white woman get off the train late at night. On one hand, he was raised with the values of kindness and hospitality, but he is afraid to approach her considering the rampant hostility against Puerto Ricans and men of color in general. Jason asked each of us to write our own ending to the story, deciding if Jesús would help the woman. This forced me and the other Fellows to deeply consider the pervasive impact of racism in our daily lives

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*“Jason asked each of us to write our own ending to the story, deciding if Jesús would help the woman. This forced me and the other Fellows to deeply consider the pervasive impact of racism in our daily lives and put ourselves into Colón’s shoes.”*

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I am so grateful I had the opportunity to learn from Jason. Looking towards a career in public service and law, I know that issues of civil liberties will play a significant role in my work. Our justice system and government, for well or ill, is made up of flawed people. In order for this system to succeed, its human components must be fully conscious of the racist legacy of the judicial system. Progress is only made when we understand our mistakes and resolve to do better. I know that my renewed understanding of civil liberties and the history of our judicial system- from the disgraceful Plessy vs. Ferguson to the victory of Brown vs. Board of Education - will inform how I see the world going forward.



## Legal Research and Writing *Jake Moy (Lindsay Fellow)*

“If you’re going to argue something, you better have the evidence to back it up.” This was the biggest lesson I took away from our legal research and writing course. When I first came into the class I expected to dip my toes into understanding legal jargon and how to properly cite cases as instructed in the infamous blue book that first year law students have referenced to me before. Instead, I was thrust into an environment where we were taught how to look up cases in a legal database and told to carefully examine them in order to understand how to use them for our arguments in our oral argument at the end of the summer.

Legal research and writing didn’t just teach me to analyze cases but to analyze every bit of information when it comes to holding opinions and arguing. In the real world if you don’t have your sources that argument is baseless. How could I expect someone to respect my opinion if my facts aren’t there? Alexis from the very beginning told us she would be honest and often said she may state opinions that we would disagree with. My colleagues and I as students of color would engage in many debates about social issues with Alexis. Time and time again she would remind us to make sure we had our facts lined up before engaging in such a discussion; and time and time again we did come back prepared with our facts.

Alexis had pushed us to constantly think critically. This skill is one that I’m sure I will carry with me throughout the rest of my college career and for the rest of my life. But what I also took away from this class was how confusing the legal world can be for students of color. In a field that is dominated by a white majority it’s rare to find someone like me or my colleagues in law school. It made me realize that perhaps the legal jargon is confusing for a reason: to discourage students of color from wanting to pursue law. I know personally looking at these court cases the legal jargon was overwhelming. I constantly had to google what words meant and found they had simpler counterparts. It made me wonder why the law couldn’t just use these simpler words so that everyone could understand. This class and that moment has further pushed me to want to pursue law school in hopes I can encourage other people who look like me to pursue law and find ways to ensure everyone can understand the law. As challenging as it was, I’m glad I got to experience legal research and writing. It still baffles me that I went through a course meant to be taught over a whole semester in a matter of four weeks. If I learned nothing else, at the very least, I can leave the summer confident that I can back up an argument thanks to Alexis.



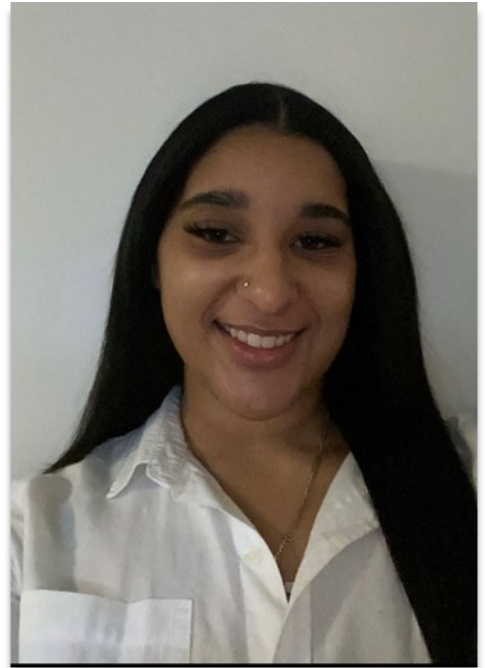
## Meeting with Adam Foss *Ashanty Perez (Nelson Fellow)*

**Breaking News:** my fantastic summer as a Nelson Fellow was unforgettable, one like no other. It is where I built memories that I will carry on for the rest of my life and acknowledge throughout my career path. My remarkable experience consisted of attending hearings, working with my chambers, mock trials and improving my writing and public speaking skills. One of my favorite parts of this summer was meeting with different people with different careers in the legal field. I have been inspirationally touched by these speakers and the one I will acknowledge out of many will be meeting with Adam Foss.

In 2013, the Massachusetts Bar Association voted him Prosecutor of the Year and in 2015, the National Law Journal selected Foss as one of the country's top 40 up-and-coming lawyers. In both his professional and personal capacities, he has volunteered much of his time to his community.

Adam Foss shared his tragic experience in losing his job from using his human rights, and speaking on behalf of his beliefs. Foss was a former Massachusetts A.D.A. who began his career path being the representative of the elected D.A at the time. Unfortunately, his experience working for the D.A.'s Office was not at all what he dreamed it would be. Using what he learned from this experience, he became motivated to make a change in the community, society in general, and worldwide.

Foss founded Prosecutor Impact, an important non-profit geared towards training prosecutors. He is also the founder of the SCDAO Reading Program, a project designed to bridge the achievement gap of area elementary school students. Foss is clearly driven to help youth grow into a healthy and successful lifestyle. He is impelled to change our corrupted system and mass incarceration in our country. He works with probation officers, interacts with and is very amiable with most prisoners. Foss makes sure he reaches out to the ones in difficult times, and he is truly motivated to change lives. He is very much involved in turning around the lives of people who are wrongfully incarcerated from wrongful accusations and have not yet had their cases justified. Adam Foss has become one of Boston's leading voices for compassion in criminal justice. According to TED.com, he co-founded the Roxbury CHOICE Program, a collaborative effort between defendants, the court, the probation department, and the D.A. to recast probation as a transformative experience rather than a punitive process. Foss dedicated his career in assuring public safety, improving the lives of youth and the ones in Suffolk County. This experience was truly distinctive, it will guide me throughout my career in criminal justice as a criminal defense lawyer, working to change the lives of many humans, giving them all one day another opportunity just like Adam Foss.





## Meeting with Rafael Feliciano Cumbas *Kathleen Alvarez (Nelson Fellow)*

Rafael Feliciano Cumbas: the first time I heard his name was at the start of the summer when he needed to postpone our meeting with him. At the time, I saw him as just another name on our long scheduled of Zoom calls, and I didn't mind the sudden change. I failed to realize how important that meeting could have been for me; I was ignorant until he rescheduled. To give some background, I was out for two weeks because of a family emergency and the day I was ready to come back I was told I would love the speaker that day. That speaker was Rafael. That meeting was what made me realize why I loved the Nelson Fellowship. It made the first day back feel warm and full of fire.

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I rarely meet people who are like me, or see them succeed in a profession I aspire to have. People who aren't neurotypical, who are from poverty, whose parents are immigrants, who struggle with basic schooling, and those who have struggled to get where they are. Not to say that others have not struggled, but usually when we hear success stories we hear about the end result, when success has been achieved. When hearing these stories, we rarely hear about the hiccups in their journey; only one other speaker in the Fellowship really spoke on her own struggles to success. Throughout the Nelson Fellowship, we heard speakers mostly talk about how they got to where they are by going to college and finding a profession and then slowly climbing up the ladder of success. Rafael was different. Rafael admittedly told us that he dropped out of an exam school and transferred to a different high school only to end up failing again. Rafael went to the same high school that I graduated from. The same guidance counselor that helped me graduate when I was struggling with my own mental health battle, helped Rafael graduate when he was struggling to obtain his high school degree.

The same fire in Rafael's voice, I aspire to have. The same struggles he spoke about I felt it in my core and I never felt so empowered. He's someone who dealt with the same cards that I have been dealt with and is making it. His story was raw and honest. He was unapologetic of how he got where he is and what got him where he is. That honestly helped truly humanize him, instead of being just another speaker. At the time of listening to him tell his stories, I felt hope in my own. He was a Fellowship alum that I aspire to be like. I hope one day I can come back and tell my story and be able to impact a future Nelson Fellow like he did for me.



## Attending a C.A.R.E. Session *Kejsi Demaj (Nelson Fellow)*

The Court Assisted Recovery Effort (C.A.R.E.) is a one-year program that helps the participants in establishing a sober, employed, and law-abiding life to promote both public safety and self-rehabilitation. The Court, the Probation Office, the U.S. Attorney's Office, and the Federal Defender Office all participate in C.A.R.E. to improve the participants' quality of life. At each weekly meeting, the Court reviews the status of each participant in the program, discusses possible changes in treatment, compliance problems, and sanctions. Upon graduation from C.A.R.E., a defendant earns a one-year reduction in the term of supervised release. This is a wonderful program for people who might be struggling in their journey to stay sober or to find employment because it holds the participants accountable as well as provides them with the resources they need to succeed in their daily lives.

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The Nelson Fellows had the opportunity to watch a C.A.R.E. session with Judge Kelley earlier this summer. It was a great chance to see the participants and to listen to the journey they had taken to find employment, get learning opportunities, and maintain their sobriety through the help of the court. While the program is currently held via Zoom, it still maintains a level of humanity with the participants as they have the chance to speak and tell their story without being judged or seen as just a “criminal.”



This program has opened my eyes to the rehabilitative side of the justice system that values individuals and understands the struggles of people who have never been given a chance to succeed due to various unforeseen events. I was excited to hear that one of the participants had just finished the program and as he reflected on his time it opened my eyes to the impact that Judge Kelley, the various attorneys, and sponsors have on the participants. It has inspired me to one day be involved in this type of program and to help reassure someone who might be at a low point in their life to find the inspiration in moving forward in their rehabilitation process.

## Mr. Howland's Mock Trial Class *Lesley Martinez Gomez (Nelson Fellow)*

Mr. Howland's class was interesting from the second he said, and I quote, "See you in court!" I wasn't entirely sure how to take such a statement but, once I joined our first Zoom meeting together, I knew that the entire class was going to be filled with new experiences. There were many interesting parts of the class, even when it started. We watched courtroom movie scenes and named all the objections that could be made to practice our skills for our mock trial. I should have expected movies to up the drama in the courtroom, as they deem regular trial court as "boring." With Mr. Howland, no moment was boring. Each class gave us an insight into how it was being a lawyer. Some Nelson Fellows are interested in becoming lawyers and having this class was a great advantage. The mock trial we were all prepping for brought us together, where we could give constructive feedback and advice in a comfortable environment. We chose what roles we wanted to take in the mock trial and gave it our all. As we were the prosecution, we had the opportunity to explain our case to the Lindsey Fellows. They gave us a lot of feedback to work with and just speaking to them about the law was so fascinating.

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I wasn't entirely sure on what I wanted my career to be when joining the Nelson Fellows, yet Mr. Howland's class continued to push me towards the legal field. I couldn't understand why I was so intrigued with questioning a witness or why I looked forward to reading a ton of pages for our mock trial case. I was prepared to act as one of the witnesses for the prosecution, yet I was still eager to help everyone else in any way I could. Last year, I participated in this mock trial on the JYC's side. This year was so different compared to then, even though I was in the prosecution both years. The Nelson Fellows brought an entirely different energy, one I looked forward to seeing every weekday. Yes, I'm going to miss everyone's creativity and motivation, but I am so grateful to have worked together with them in Mr. Howland's class.



## Chambers *Kahron Gaul-Blakley (Nelson Fellow)*

Thank you Nelson Fellowship program! This year I was fortunate to be a Nelson Fellow which allowed me to grow as a student and as a person. Coming into the Fellowship I was nervous; nervous to meet new people, and nervous to be in such an intense program. However, as the program went on, everyone was nice and friendly and we became close. Even though it's an intense program, it was still an exciting one.

As a Nelson Fellow, you are assigned to a judge's chambers. I had the opportunity to be assigned to U.S. District Judge George A. O'Toole Jr.'s chambers. Judge O'Toole was nominated by William J. Clinton April 4, 1995, and received commission on May 26, 1995. Judge O'Toole went to Boston College for his undergraduate degree and went to Harvard Law School to get his law degree.

Being in the chambers with Judge O'Toole, the law clerks, and law interns was a great experience because I got to hear them break down a case. Hearing them break down a case was interesting because sometimes it could be a big case, but it can come down to one word. I also enjoyed the chambers because they always offered me help if I needed help with an assignment in the program and they always gave me information/notes about a particular case Judge O'Toole was working on or another case that was interesting.

Overall, the time spent in chambers is something I'll always cherish because I got to actually see a judge at work and the work that goes into settling a case. I want to say thank you to Judge O'Toole, Shannon, Alicia, Jane, Armen, and Aaron for the opportunity to work with you.





## Probation and RISE *Janelle Rodrigues (Lindsay Fellow)*

When I was accepted as a Lindsay Fellow, I originally wanted to be a part of the Federal Defenders Office because I wanted to learn more about why minorities lack access to fair representation during trials. With everything happening around the world with the Black Lives Matter Movement, I also wanted to continue to learn about why black men are forced to take plea deals because of the fear of going to trial and avoiding the maximum time in prison. I instead went to the U.S. Probation Office, and after my extensive participation and collaboration with this office, I feel more attached to this field. Everything happens for a reason and I was ready to dive in and help make a change for those in need in these difficult circumstances.



While struggling with this global pandemic, I was exposed to many rehabilitation programs that the U.S. Probation Office provides. Through the Lindsay Fellowship Program, I was fortunate enough to sit in Zoom meetings and see how programs such as R.I.S.E operate. Many people believe that probation officers are there to make their lives more difficult, but in reality probation officers are there to help those in need. These officers are willing to figure out the underlying issues and the conditions that apply. Although there is a high representation of people of color being charged with crimes, there are many people of color who need help. Sometimes having someone who looks like you or can relate to you on a more personal level can be more beneficial than having someone who hasn't gone through the same or similar experiences.

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*“My initial impression of probation officers included thoughts that they were tough on crime because they are able to apply the law. I was surprised to see that their job description included similar duties of social workers and mental health counselors.”*

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The probation officers emphasized that drug treatment and mental health treatment should be provided and addressed instead of the individual just saying “I’m sorry, I won’t do it again.” I believe that someone who is willing to say that they need help, is more meaningful than someone who denies it and believes that there’s nothing wrong with them. Programs such as R.I.S.E hold people accountable for their actions and decision-making.

I am still in awe of hearing their stories, because many people might think that their own lives are terrible and don’t realize that there are other people who are struggling with a lot more issues. I want to thank Probation for exposing me to programs such as R.I.S.E because I am more educated and aware that many people go through difficult situations in life, and the way that you cope with that pain depends on you.

## Mediation Training with Judge Dein and Judge Bowler *Josh Nagy (Nelson Fellow)*

Hello, my name is Josh Nagy and I am one of the Nelson Fellows of 2020. I am 16 years old and a rising junior at the John D O'Bryant School. Coming into the summer, I was interested in the legal system but I certainly have learned quite a lot more this summer. For example, one thing I have learned about this summer is mediation, which at the start of the summer I didn't even know existed.

During one afternoon of the program, we had a Zoom meeting with Judge Dein and Judge Bowler who know all about mediation. They taught us everything we needed to know. We began the discussion by talking about how mediation started back in around the 90's. If I'm remembering correctly, it started because Congress instructed the judiciary to start a program where people would be able to hopefully work out their differences outside of a trial setting. Congress was rather vague on how to go about this, but eventually, Judge Dein and Judge Bowler, along with courts across the country got to work at trying to set up a system for mediation. Both judges were big fans of mediation because they feel that it can accomplish what both sides are looking for without all the hassle and expenses of a trial. The good thing about mediation is that once it is done it is done – there are no more court dates or referrals or appeals or back and forth. Mediation also provides a place for people to be heard, which is often what people are looking for, more than money or other compensation. They said the most common case that come to mediation involve divorce/child custody, workplace disputes, personal injury, financial matters, damaged property, or virtually any dispute where both parties want to avoid trial.

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*“Mediation also provides a place for people to be heard, which is often what people are looking for, more than money or other compensation.”*

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After we learned all of this about mediation from Judge Dein and Judge Bowler, we went into small groups of ourselves and tried to practice a mediation scenario. We went into small breakout groups and we were given a couple of scenarios that might end up in mediation court. In our small groups, we had to play different roles, advocating for the different positions and people that were in the dispute. This gave us an idea of what might happen in mediation and I think thanks to this experience we all learned a lot more about mediation than we knew in the first place.



## Restorative Justice at the U.S. District Court *Ona Gjoleka (Lindsay Fellow)*

It may be seen as needless to say, but it is important to acknowledge that we are living through unprecedented times: whether it be living through a world-wide pandemic, or witnessing and participating in massive social justice protests that are demanding justice and equality for all. Two weeks before the Lindsay Fellowship took place, I was skeptical of the experience and the knowledge we would acquire through the Court. I was skeptical of whether the Court was treating the individuals whose circumstances had led to them being caught within the justice system as humans, rather than engaging in the dehumanizing and humiliating process we oftentimes see on TV. However, with the aid and knowledge provided by Judge Sorokin, U.S. Attorney James Herbert, and Probation Officer Maria D'Addieco, we quickly learned that there are programs and resources available to these individuals that are not widely known. One of these programs is RISE: a restorative justice-based program.

Restorative justice is often an ideal theory one reads in a sociological theory book or a progressive criminal justice reform manual, however, it is also a theory and practice that is alive and performed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts. Restorative justice is part of the RISE (Repair, Invest, Succeed, Emerge) program that is designed for individuals who have pled guilty and are under pretrial supervision prior to sentencing. It seeks to see every crime as harm while bringing in every side of the crime including the responsible parties, members of the community, survivors, victims, and volunteers. Restorative justice reverses the dehumanizing process present in the criminal justice system while posing and answering questions that include: *Who has been harmed? What was the harm? What can be done to repair this harm?* It focuses on what harm was caused to the community while looking at the responsible party and keeping them accountable for their actions.

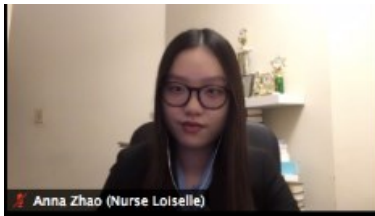
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*“Restorative justice reverses the dehumanizing process present in the criminal justice system while posing and answering questions that include: Who has been harmed? What was the harm? What can be done to repair this harm?”*

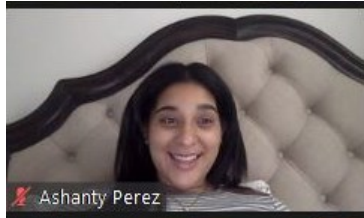
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While there are two mandatory sessions that each individual in RISE must participate in, there are also two voluntary sessions that include readings and reflections as well as individual restorative meetings available to the parties. The two mandatory sessions include an introductory session where the responsible parties are informed about restorative justice and what to expect the following two days which are filled with circle workshops and other activities for the participants. During those two days the responsible parties, community members, survivors, victims (sometimes surrogate), and volunteers converse with one another, while the emphasis is placed on the human connections we hold dearly. Those who participate in the program leave with a perspective shift and gain empathy for others – but most importantly, themselves.

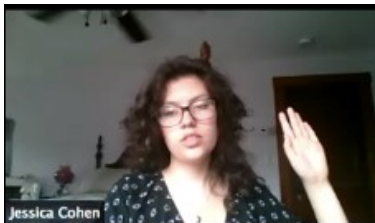
# Meet the 2020 Nelson Fellows:



Anna Zhao is a rising senior at Quincy High School. She was placed in Judge Boal's chambers this summer.



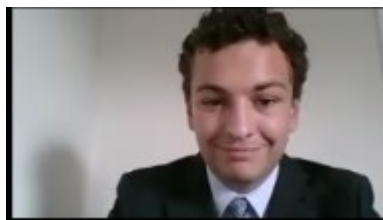
Ashanty Perez is a rising junior at Fenway High School. She was placed in Judge Cabell's chambers.



Jessica Cohen is a rising senior at South Worcester High School. She was placed in Judge Gorton's chambers.



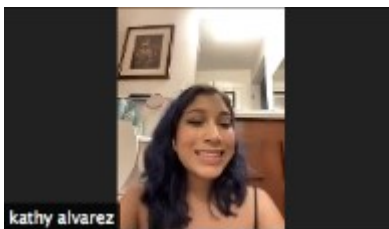
Jolina Mahabali is a rising junior at Fenway High School. She was placed in Judge Casper's chambers.



Josh Nagy is a rising junior at John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science. He was placed in Judge Saris' chambers.

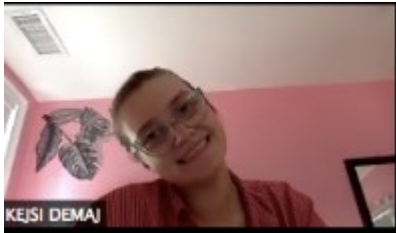


Kahron Gaul-Blakley is a rising junior at John D. O'Bryant School of Math & Science. He was placed in Judge O'Toole's chambers.



Kathy Alvarez is a rising first year student at Suffolk University who recently graduated from Snowden High School. She was placed in Judge Sorokin's chambers.

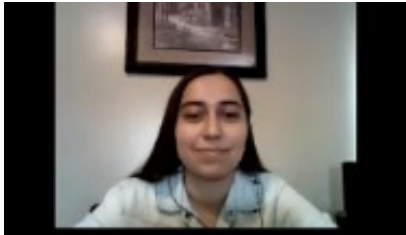




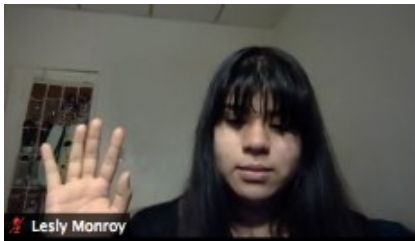
Kejsi Demaj is a rising senior at Boston Latin Academy and was placed in Judge Young's as well as Judge Dein's chambers.



Nick Rodriguez is a rising senior at North Worcester High School. He was placed in Judge Hennessy's chambers.



Lesley Martinez Gomez graduated from Boston Latin Academy and will be starting her first year at Simmons University studying Political Science. She was placed in Judge Stearns' chambers.



Lesly Monroy graduated from Boston Arts Academy, and is headed to Bucknell University this month! She was placed in Judge Burroughs' chambers.

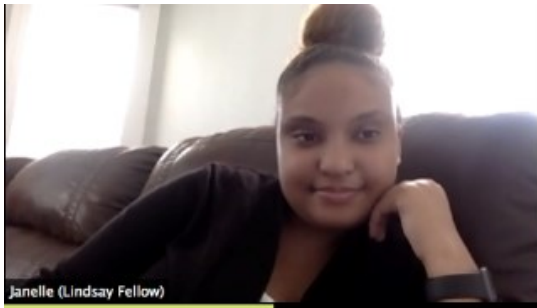


Star Igbinosa is a rising junior at The Academy of the Pacific Rim and was placed in Judge Talwani's chambers.

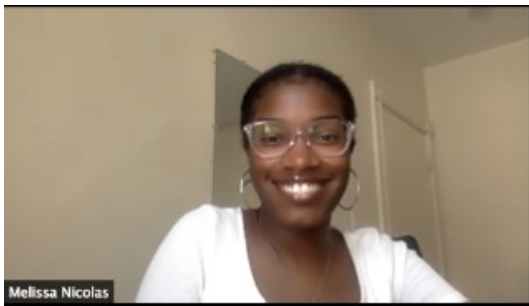
# Meet the 2020 Lindsay Fellows:



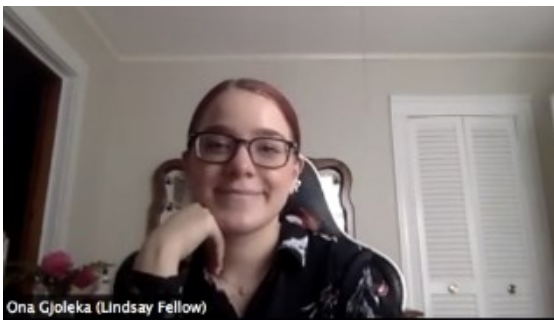
Jake Moy is a rising senior of Temple University where he majors in Criminal Justice and minors in Psychology. He spent his summer in Judge Saris' chambers and the Federal Defenders Office.



Janelle Rodriguez is a rising senior who will be graduating this December from University of Massachusetts. She majors in Crime and Justice Studies with a minor in Urban Studies. She spent the summer in Judge Gorton's chambers and the Probation Office.



Melissa Nicolas is a rising senior at Brandeis University and was placed in Judge Young's (and Judge Dein's) chambers as well as the U.S. Attorney's Office. She is a Politics major and a Legal Studies and Psychology double minor.



Ona Gjoleka is another rising senior studying at University of Massachusetts Lowell, she majors in Sociology and has a double minor in Arabic and Art History. She was placed in Judge Stearns' chambers and in the Probation Office.



Sara Sarmiento is a rising senior at Mount Holyoke where she is a double major in International Relations and Critical Social Thought. This summer she was placed in Judge Boal's chambers and the Federal Defenders Office.



Shay Borden is also a rising senior at Connecticut College where she is a double major in Africana Studies and Psychology. She was placed in Judge Casper's chambers and in the U.S. Attorney's Office.



## TO DONATE:

Donations are welcome. Checks should be made out to Federal Bar Association - Massachusetts Chapter. Please include a note designating the funds for Ginny Hurley Memorial Scholarship.

Donations should be sent to FBA Treasurer Josh Segal at c/o Lawson & Weitzen LLP, 88 Black Falcon Avenue, Suite 345 Boston, MA 02210.

Donations after Oct. 1 2020 should be sent to incoming FBA Treasurer Brian Murphy at c/o Murphy & Rudolf LLP, One Mercantile Street, Suite 740 Worcester, MA 01608.

## Ginny Hurley Memorial Scholarship



Ginny Hurley joined the Clerk's Office of the United States District Court, District of Massachusetts in 1976 as a Deputy Clerk.

Through the years her responsibilities grew and she touched the lives of virtually every member of the Court family. From 2003 until her passing, Ginny was responsible for organizing all of the educational programs at the Court for the bench, bar and public. Her title of "Outreach Coordinator" reflected the fact that she was the face of the court, welcoming all who came to take part in the judicial system, including dignitaries from around the world, international and national press, and

students from down the street, all with grace and a smile. Ginny was a good friend, teacher and mentor. She was a quick wit, and had the ability to make people laugh.

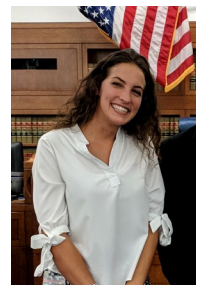
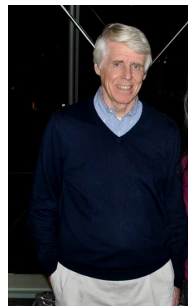
Ginny derived great satisfaction coordinating the Court's summer programs for high school and college students – the Lindsay and Nelson Fellowship programs. She helped nurture and train the next generation to appreciate and participate in the legal process.

In memory of her tremendous work for these students, the Massachusetts Chapter of the Federal Bar Association has established the Ginny Hurley Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship, for books or tuition expenses, will be awarded annually to all graduating Lindsay and Nelson Fellows.

## SPECIAL THANKS TO:

A special thank you to teachers Alexis Hamdan, Jamele Adams, Jason Wise, and Jerry Howland who have consistently worked closely with both Fellowships. We would like to thank them for their support and dedication. Thank you all for your flexibility, creativity, and commitment to the Fellows this virtual summer!

Thank you to Judge Dein and Judge Casper for overseeing the Fellowships, and Carolyn Meckbach for coordinating the programs year-round. We appreciate your dedication and efforts!





## THANK YOU!

Our Devoted Judges, Chambers' Staff, Law Clerks, and Interns

Alexis Hamdan, Esq.

Jerry Howland

Jamele Adams

Jason Wise

Cheryl Lindsay

The Hurley Family

Miriam Conrad, Federal Defender, and Staff (Point - Jessica Thrall)

Ricardo Carter, Chief United States Probation Officer, and Staff (Point - Deputy Chief Allyson Lorimer Crews)

Andrew E. Lelling, United States Attorney, and Staff (Points - Anne Paruti Lohnes & Annapurna Balakrishna)

Robert Farrell, USDC Clerk of Court, and Staff

Josh Bruno and the Boston Private Industry Council

Bottom Line, Boston

Posse Foundation, Boston

Summer Search, Boston

Juliet Davison and Erika Reis, Federal Bar Association

Lissy Medvedow, Boston College Law Rappaport Center

Gail Packer, Community Dispute Settlement Center, and Staff

Bob Ross, Governor Baker's Chief Legal Counsel, and Paige Ferreira

William Gross, Boston Police Department Commissioner

Barbara Morse & the Pro Se Office

Adam Foss & Staff at Prosecutor Impact

Jonathan Handler & Staff at Day Pitney LLP

Kathleen Portillo & Dominique Rainey - Bottom Line, Boston

Lisa White & Library Staff

Courtney Scott, Choate Hall & Stewart LLP

Judge Ponsor—generous donation of The Hanging Judge

Annabel Rodriguez, Esq.

Doris Fitzpatrick, U.S. Probation

Rafael Feliciano Cumbas, Esq.

Taisha Sturdivant, Esq.

Jermaine Kidd, Esq. &

the numerous other Fellowship alumni and guest speakers who have consistently shared their knowledge, experience and support!

*“While we sat on these video chats, day in and day out, the world kept turning right outside our doors. June came with political protests and conversations that translated into issues we saw in the courtroom. Most of us had been quarantining since March, so the start of this Fellowship also came with our vibrant expectation of something new. Some structure! Some routine! The excitement of learning! We wrote speeches and debates in Jamele’s class that helped us analyze our positionalities and privileges in the wider scope of this present moment. In Jerry’s class we curiously dissected facts, body language, and systemic issues as we tried to grasp at the intricacies of the legal system we were just starting to know. In Alexis’s class we learned (and unlearned) different modalities of research and writing all in anticipation for today – the oral arguments. Every single one of our teachers, guest speakers, panelists, and visitors had one thing in common: they wanted to be a part of our journey. They knew the magic that this Fellowship holds and were willing to adapt in ways that would’ve never had to happen before 2020. That is what you do for family. The unthinkable.”*

*- excerpt, Sara Sarmiento’s 2020 Lindsay Graduation Speech*