NYLS STUDENTS TAKE ACTION

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Elder Law Clinic Case Profiled in The New York Times

A case that the Elder Law Clinic worked on two years ago found its way into a New York Times article last May. The client, Bettina Grossman, lives in the Chelsea Hotel. She found herself in a dispute with the management about the conditions in her apartment. That dispute led to the filing of a guardianship proceeding. New York Law School student Melissa Gencarelli ’07, together with Clinic mentor attorney Alfreida Kenny and Professors Grosberg and Strauss, represented Ms. Grossman in a hearing in the Supreme Court and successfully defeated the attempted guardianship.

Through their efforts, as well as those of a very supportive fellow resident in the Chelsea Hotel, Ms. Grossman is now firmly situated in her apartment with no fear of eviction. Both Ms. Grossman and her new friend in the building, Sam Bassett, are artists. Their mutual aesthetic interests grew into what The Times described as a “Harold and Maude” relationship and to Sam’s completion of a documentary film about Ms. Grossman.

Bettina Grossman (left) and Sam Bassett (right). Sam Bassett created a documentary film about Ms. Grossman.

To find out more about clinics/externships please contact the Lawyering Skills Center at 212.431.2179.

Melissa Gencarelli
Urban Law Clinic Students Protect Voter Rights in New Orleans

Urban Law Clinic students Jessica Fisher (3L) and Charlene Barker (2L), along with Justice Action Center student Zachary Kerner (3L), traveled to New Orleans to join the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF) in its voter protection initiative. LDF litigates cases and assists disenfranchised voters all over the country to ensure that the rights of African Americans and other minorities are protected. One of LDF’s target states during this year’s election is Louisiana because of the massive displacement of voters since Hurricane Katrina. Many voters in New Orleans, one of the areas most affected, are either unaware of where to vote or are turned away from the polls due to issues such as problems with address verification. The students took to the streets during Louisiana’s congressional primary to educate voters and help them navigate the election system to ensure that they were able to cast their ballots.

In one instance, the students were able to help disabled voters gain access to an inaccessible polling site. They were also repeatedly called upon to advocate on behalf of voters who were turned away from the polls, ultimately ensuring that dozens of voters had their ballots counted. The students also visited the Lower Ninth Ward, the area hit hardest by Hurricane Katrina, to assist those residents in voting. In November, the students will continue their efforts and return to Louisiana in November for the general election. Following the election, they will draft complaints against Louisiana Board of Election officials regarding any voting violations that occur.

Securities Arbitration Clinic Educates Clients in Wake of Financial Crisis

The Securities Arbitration Clinic continues to receive numerous inquiries from potential clients in the wake of the current financial crisis. Clinic students have been extremely busy evaluating potential claims and causes of action against registered representatives and brokerage firms that may have made unsuitable investment recommendations to their customers. The Clinic is also expanding its community outreach efforts in order to inform the investing public of the responsibilities of the brokerage industry and what options customers may have in pursuing their legal remedies.

Criminal Law Clinic Student Gets Case Dismissed

Criminal Law Clinic alum Peter Hanschke ’08 just can’t get enough of the Clinic! After graduating in the spring, Peter continued to work on one of his clinic cases, through the bar exam and beyond. His perseverance paid off in mid-October when a criminal court judge dismissed the assault charges against his client.

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