



Professor Liz Schneider

A Celebration of 35 Years of Vision and Leadership of
The Edward V. Sparer Public Interest Law Fellowship Program



Thank you, Liz!

Thirty five years ago you had a brilliant idea—
create a public interest specialty and identity at Brooklyn Law School!
Your vision and hard work launched and sustained the flagship Sparer program.
You inspired hundreds of students; nurtured a true public interest community;
generated timely, educational, and provocative programming;
and launched the careers of many of today's leaders in public interest organizations.

You leave an indelible legacy at Brooklyn Law School and the world of law.



Dear Liz:

We were present at the birth of the Sparer Program and have proudly watched as the program grew, matured and became one of the most important components of Brooklyn Law School. The Sparer community of over 700 students, alumni and faculty is a pillar of the law school. You launched our national identity as a law school that supports and nourishes (literally at our frequent lunches) public interest students. Your energy and commitment never flagged over the past 35 years. For us, as longstanding, loyal members of the faculty's Sparer Committee, the program has been an important constant in our lives at the law school.

Thank you for all the work you have done.

Minna, Susan, and Stacy

Danielle Sorkin

I want to thank you for all that you have done to serve the public interest community at Brooklyn Law School. As I reflect on all that you have contributed (and I know will continue to contribute), I realize that but for your advocacy in creating the Edward V. Sparer Fellowship and tireless commitment to fostering a public interest community at BLS, I would not have the privilege of writing this letter as the Executive Director of the Public Service Law Center. You planted and nurtured the seed of public interest into the robust and sprawling community that we see at every lunch, every forum and in this book. I cannot thank you enough for the support you have given me as I took on the leadership role in the public service office. The public service community at BLS owes you an incredible debt of gratitude for all that you have given us and hope as the program moves forward we can make you proud.

Thank you and congratulations,
Danielle
Executive Director Public Service Law Center
Brooklyn Law School
718-780-0341
danielle.sorkin@brooklaw.edu

Cynthia Godsoe

Like so many others, I am so grateful for the amazing legacy you have created at Brooklyn Law School, and for your mentorship to me personally. Following you as director of the Sparer program is both inspiring and humbling. Your vision in founding one of the first law school student public interest fellowships in the country is unparalleled. You laid the groundwork for generations of BLS students to work together during and after law school to create a more just and equal society. The many panel discussions and symposia on pressing social justice issues have also irrevocably shaped the BLS community and the world beyond. Carrying forward this tradition of public interest work is a great honor. I, our faculty colleagues, and the hundreds of students and alums participating in the Sparer program, will strive to live up to your vision and aim to make you proud.

Congratulations and thank you again,
Cynthia





Rachel Braunstein '03

Congratulations on your incredible leadership and many accomplishments as the Director of the Sparer Program. I am so grateful for the opportunity to reflect on your mentorship during my time at the law school and since graduation. As a student with a fairly clear idea that I wanted to target my professional life toward women's rights advocacy, I was so lucky to learn from you the ways in which lawyering can advance feminist ideals and causes. Thank you for your encouragement to think deeply and radically about the law as a tool of social justice reform, and for all of your support over the years.

With great affection,
Rachel Braunstein
Director, Policy, Her Justice
rachelbraunstein@yahoo.com

Yolanda Castro-Arcé '98

Twenty-two years ago I entered law school searching for my place within the profession, as a woman of color. The fellowship and your guidance formed my identity as an attorney that serves my community by establishing soup kitchens and programs for marginalized people. As I pursue a graduate degree at Yale University, I am forever a Sparer Fellow and your student.

Wishing you the very best,
Yolanda Castro-Arcé
Managing Partner, Arce Law Office, PLLC
arcelawoffice@aol.com 917-728-0850

Edward De Barbieri '08

1,000 thank you's and hurrah's to Professor Liz Schneider for her decades of leadership, service, and vision to the Sparer Program and Sparer Alums everywhere! I love Brooklyn Law School and the Sparer Program was where I found my professional development home as a student – where I could advance what I learned in the classroom to where and how I sought to practice.

Ted De Barbieri '08
Associate Professor of Law
Director Economic Development Clinic, Albany Law School
edebe@albanylaw.edu





Karen Comstock '89

It is my pleasure to add my well-wishes to your retirement festivities. Hard to believe it was over 30 years ago that you hired me, fresh out of law school, to lend my very green talents to Brooklyn Law School's public interest program. What a fortuitous occurrence for me. Your leap of faith helped me realize my place in the public interest law movement, and after 5 years at BLS, led to a wonderful 22 years at Cornell. Thank you for your leadership, kindness and humor. I think back very fondly on the Sparer Program and all of the lucky students who benefited from the education and support the program provided. Supporting the next generation of public interest lawyers is a noble endeavor, and you were one of the first law faculty to realize that. I know your retirement from the leadership of the Sparer Program does not signal the end of your teaching and mentorship. All the best to you as you move on to new and creative ways to seek justice and equity in this crazy world. I continue to feel hopeful, and it is in no small part because of the inspiration I have felt from those students and the faculty, like you, who support them. And as you always said to me, "be well".

Fondly,
Karen Comstock
Assistant Dean for Public Service, Cornell Law School
kvc2@cornell.edu







Archana Dittakavi '11

I'm writing to wish you the very best and thank you for your time and dedication to the Sparer program at Brooklyn Law School. The Sparer program has meant a great deal to me over the years and since graduating from law school in 2011 I have been fortunate to have had a career solely in the public interest sector. I have you and the Sparer program and community to thank for that. I look forward to our paths continuing to cross and wish you and your family the very best.

Archana Dittakavi
Deputy Director, Tenant Rights Coalition
Manhattan Legal Services
archana.dittakavi@gmail.com

Kristin Gallagher '11

I am a 2011 graduate of Brooklyn Law School and a recipient of a 2009 Sparer Fellowship. I spent my summer in The Hague working for a nonprofit that advocates for gender justice within the International Criminal Court. After the fellowship, I maintained my relationship with the nonprofit and subsequently travelled to Uganda and The Democratic Republic of Congo for conferences that brought together advocates of gender equality. I also wrote an article arguing for a broad definition of child soldiers in the ICC's first case; that article was published in the 2010 issue of the legal journal *Eyes on the ICC*. I am so grateful for the opportunities afforded me by my participation as a Sparer Fellow and I thank you for leading the program for 35 years.

Best regards,
Kristin
gallagkr@gmail.com



Terry Frederic '19

The Edward V. Sparer Public Interest Fellowship means a lot to me, and was easily a highlight of my law school experience, because it enabled me to marry my passion for service with my legal studies. Because of the Sparer program, I had the opportunity to intern at the Legal Aid Society my 1L summer, which, in turn, put me in a position to advocate for indigent tenants both in court and before the New York City Housing Authority. As I write these words, and especially during these trying times, I am reminded of how deeply fulfilling it was to assist tenants in their endeavors to keep their homes. I was also fortunate to be selected for the Youth Reentry clinic headed by Ms. Laurie Parise—easily one of my favorite academic and clinical experiences during my time at Brooklyn Law School. Finally, as a Fellow I learned about areas of critical thought and activism I had not been previously exposed to, thanks to the many elucidating programs and discussions I got to attend that were headed by peers and colleagues. Moreover, I would like to say how thankful I am to have been your student. As my Civil Procedure Professor, you instilled in me the importance of thinking critically about the development of the law, and made sure to ground your lessons within the broader societal and historical fabric of this country in a way that made my studies feel real, meaningful, and accessible. Thank you for your service both as a Professor and as the Director of the Sparer program.

Sincerely,
Terry Frederic
terry.frederic@brooklaw.edu

Beile Lindner '13

Congratulations on 35 years at Sparer's helm!!! And now for some well-deserved down time, I hope? As a former Sparer fellow, I cannot thank you enough for your mentorship and the opportunity to participate in such a supportive public interest community. I loved being a fellow, and made the most wonderful friends through that program. I also believe it set me up for success as a now public-interest lawyer out in the world (going on 7 years!). Everyone who has practiced public interest law knows you can't thrive in this area without meaningful, personal connections to others and institutional encouragement - and Sparer has provided these for me.

Take care,
Beile Lindner
Staff Attorney
Homebase / The Center for Common
Concerns
beilemorrow@gmail.com

Terri Herubin '89

Thank you for having led the Sparer Program from its infancy. I attended Brooklyn Law School in 1986 because I had been awarded the Fellowship. I had my heart set on interning at the Center for Constitutional Rights the summer after first year - nothing like aiming high! Your recommendation to CCR was instrumental in my placement, and my first assignment was to assist in the drafting of an amicus brief to the U.S. Supreme Court. For a butcher's daughter from the Bronx, my experience at CCR set a pretty high bar for everything that followed. Thank you forever for your leadership and caring, and for encouraging me to dream big. I will be forever grateful.

Best regards,
Terri
Managing Director, Greystar
terriherubin@yahoo.com

Erin Durkin '12

Beyond the experiences of my Sparer summer internship at Alaska Legal Services and the many Sparer lunches that offered interesting information while also feeding us hungry law school students, the most beneficial part of the Sparer program for me was making quality friendships. I'm now over eight years out of law school and my lasting law school friendships are with fellow Sparer alums. Thank you for building that community.

All my best,
Erin Durkin
Hirschen Singer & Epstein LLP
erin.durkin@gmail.com

Steven T. Hasty '13

Thank you for your leadership of the Sparer program over the years. Being a Sparer fellow certainly improved my law school experience. It felt like I was part of a bigger public interest lawyering community from the start, connecting me with peers from each year's class, as well as like minded professors and members of the New York City public interest lawyering community, all of whom were generous with their time. That made even the worst exam prep anxiety tolerable, since I could connect what I was doing with my broader life mission of serving people in need. I am grateful to everyone who helped organize the program, and in particular, you Professor Schneider.

Steven T. Hasty
Supervising Attorney, Civil Action Practice
The Bronx Defenders
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Laurie Izutsu '05

I was so honored to serve as an Edward V. Sparer Public Interest Law Fellow in 2004. Through my internship at New York Legal Assistance Group, I was able to win my first case at an HRA administrative hearing and ensure that my client's Medicaid benefits were reinstated. I also gained many brilliant, compassionate colleagues through the Sparer program that I might not have ever had the good fortune to know. Being a Sparer Fellow made my experience at BLS all the more enriching and your role as Director was invaluable. Many, many heartfelt thanks for your important work.

Be well,
Laurie Izutsu
South Brooklyn Legal Services
laurieizutsu@hotmail.com

Seher Khawaja '09

Starting at Brooklyn law school in the Fall of 2006, I was privileged not only to have your guidance as the head of the Sparer program but also as my Civil Procedure professor. To this day, I carry with me the principle you instilled that civil procedure, at its core, is about access to justice. Having practiced law for more than ten years, I understand this now more than ever. All this is to say, thank you for your leadership and guidance those three years and your ongoing commitment to social justice. It has stuck with me. The Sparer program brought me to BLS, and I have carried my invaluable experiences as a Sparer Fellow with me ever since. As a Senior Attorney working on economic justice at a national women's rights organization, I can say that the training I received and the community we built did me well. I am thankful to be living my commitment to equality and human rights every day. It is hard to see you move on as the Director of the Sparer program, but I am very grateful for the incredible program you have helped build as it has given so many of us the opportunity and training to do the work we do to advance social justice.

In gratitude,
Seher Khawaja '09
Senior Attorney
Legal Momentum
seher217@gmail.com



BROOKLYN LAW SCHOOL

Edward V. Sparer

Public Interest Law
Fellowship Program

Friday, April 15, 2016

30

Thirtieth Anniversary
Edward V. Sparer Fellowship
Celebration



Jane Li '12

Thank you for leading the Sparer Program for so many years. Being a part of the Sparer Program was one of the highlights of my BLS experience and helped me make lifelong friendships with others committed to public service. That would not have been possible without your dedication and hard work. I wish you the best.

With gratitude,
Jane Li
Staff Attorney, TakeRoot Justice
puichun.li@gmail.com

Edward Mostoller '15

I would not be where I am today, in a legal services career that I love, were it not for the guiding hand of Professor Schneider during my time at BLS. Thank you Professor for all your assistance and insight, and I wish you all the best going forward.

Sincerely,
Edward Mostoller '15
Staff Attorney, Consumer Protection Unit, Foreclosure
Prevention Project, New York Legal Assistance Group
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Ryan Lilienthal '97

It's hard to believe over twenty years have passed since my time at Brooklyn Law School. I experience Liz's enduring influence every day. The seeds of knowledge she planted – as my professor in class, as my law review note advisor, and as my Sparer program mentor – continue to shape my approach to community and civic engagement I cultivate as an attorney – particularly on immigrants' rights.

Thank you, Liz!
Ryan Lilienthal
Of Counsel, Hartington King English, LLC
rsl@princetonimmigration.com

Jessica Olive '20

I cannot thank you enough for all you have done for the Sparer Program. It would not be the program it is today without your great leadership over the last 35 years. The Sparer Program shaped my experience at BLS by providing me with a close network of allies and friends who care about social justice. I know with certainty that connections I have made will not disappear simply because I have graduated BLS. I will continue to work side by side with these amazing individuals throughout my legal career. Wishing you the best as you embark on this next chapter.

Best wishes,
Jessica Olive
Jessica.olive@brooklaw.edu



Monica Mercola '20

Thank you so much for all you've done to provide not only me, but all students with the opportunity to work in public interest. I decided to join the Sparer Program because I wanted to be involved in a community. But it was so much more. Students of all walks of life told me about their ideas and aspirations. It was inspiring. The diversity in issues, people, and ideas are what made, and still makes, this program incredible. So I wanted to thank you for all you've done to make it possible.

Thank you for everything,
Monica
monica.mercola@brooklaw.edu

Amanda Lipari '18

I hope all is well! Thank you for all the work you have done to build a robust public interest community at BLS. Working in the NYC nonprofit sector I have run into many Sparer alum who are continuing to work on behalf of the public interest. I am particularly grateful for the ways in which the Sparer community work towards women's equality. I know that is a mission near and dear to your heart. I am honored and committed to continuing the Sparer legacy!

All the best,
Amanda Lipari
Staff Attorney, The Legal Aid Society of NYC
alipari@legal-aid.org

Mary Anne Mendenhall '08

Congratulations! Thirty-five years of mentorship and guidance are no small thing. I often reflect, fifteen years after your civil procedure courses, about how right you were about the intersections between substance and procedure. In twelve years representing poor people in the family court (and recently in the pandemic) I often recall your lessons about what access to justice looks like, and how it splits across socioeconomic lines. I hope you know how many of us you affected, and we salute you from a (social) distance!

Mary Anne Mendenhall,
Sparer Fellow, Fall 2015
Supervising Attorney, The Bronx Defenders
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Brooklyn Law School
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Antonia F. Pereira '12

I don't think that we knew each other when I was in school, but I wanted to send you a note because of how much the Sparer program meant to me. I went to law school because I was moved to do public service work, but, like many of my colleagues, I had many interests and passions. I felt discouraged because so many people I knew went to law school knowing exactly what they wanted to do (and had been doing it before law school). Through the Sparer program I became part of a community of like minded people, some of whom knew what they wanted to do, but not all! Being part of the community gave drive and focus, and allowed me to see more career possibilities. Today I'm an environmental lawyer working for the NYC Law Department and the Sparer program is a big part of how I got here.

Thank you for you all of your work and I wish you all the best,
Antonia Pereira '12
The City of New York Environmental Control Board
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Taier Perlman '14

While I never took a class with you, I did get to observe your dedicated and strong leadership at Sparer Roundtables and the like, and wanted to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your stewardship of this incredible program that supported my public interest law trajectory. The Sparer community offered me a chance to engage with like-minded students, faculty and professionals, sealing my own internal calling to do public service work, and I will always remember you as the force that held it all together for us. Thank you and best of everything in the next phase of your life.

Sincerely,
Taier Perlman, Esq.
Staff Attorney at Legal Services of the Hudson Valley
perlman.taier@gmail.com

Charli Cleland '16

Thank you for sharing your brilliance with all of us. Enjoy your well-deserved rest.

Lots of love,
Charli K. Cleland
The Legal Aid Society
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Jacqueline B. Rishty '90

As an early Sparer alum and one of your former Con Law students, just wanted to reach out and say thank you! Thank you for your leadership of the Sparer Program and for being such an inspiring professor! When I first applied for the Sparer fellowship for an internship in international human rights/immigration/refugee law in 1988, everyone kind of looked at my application and was like "what is this?" I wasn't pursuing a fellowship in family law or landlord tenant issues, so my interest was kind of unusual at the time, and I didn't get the scholarship that first year. However, the next year, I reapplied and pursued an internship with the United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees (UNHCR) and was granted the scholarship to go to Washington, D.C. that summer to pursue my interest. I'm so thankful for that opportunity! I'm grateful that you saw the importance of this work, and gave me the chance to explore what this field of law was all about. Following law school, I immediately became a non-profit immigration lawyer in the DC area. Almost 30 years later, I am still an attorney with that same program, and am now serving as the Director of an amazing legal team who provide more than 2,000 legal services each year, and are changing many lives. While in the late 80's/early 90's, not many people talked about "immigration law", and opportunities and clinics were few, that has all changed. Each time I see a Sparer fellow working in this field, I'm thrilled! Today, immigration is a hot topic spoken so often in the news that everyone knows what DACA is, has heard of TPS, or has heard the sad truth of families and children in detention. Thank you for having given me this critical opportunity, and doing the same for all the Sparer fellows who are figuring out what they are passionate about, and giving them the chance to make a difference in the lives of others.

All my best wishes always,
Jacqueline Rishty '90
Director, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington, Immigration Legal Services
924 G Street, NW Washington, D.C. 20001
202-772-4348 jacqueline.rishty@CC-DC.org

Tracy Peterson '00

Thank you for encouraging me to apply for a Sparer Fellowship. Applying for and then being awarded the fellowship for my 1L summer (!) was an enormous confidence boost on which I have been able to build throughout my law school and professional legal career. The experience working with Equality Now as its representative at the U.N. Human Rights Committee session in Geneva is one I never will forget. Having your support and advice throughout my time at BLS (and thereafter) has meant the world to me. Your mentorship and advice – both officially within Sparer program and beyond – has helped shape me as a lawyer and as a person. I am better for it.

Tracy Peterson
Partner, Braverman Greenspun P.C.
tracyp@braverlaw.net





Candace Sady '02

Thank you for your years of leadership, service and support of the Sparer program. You have gone above and beyond in your support of the program, the students who participate in it and indeed all students interested in a public interest legal career and social justice issues. Your consistent availability to offer advice, support, mentorship, perspective and to participate in student-led programs is exemplary.

Fondly,
Candace Sady '02
Chief Marketing Counsel, North America, Colgate-Palmolive
candace_sady@colpal.com

Samantha Smalls '00

Thank you so much for your hard work and dedication to nurture and grow the public interest community at Brooklyn Law School. I am a former Sparer fellow and have now been a public defender in NYC with the Legal Aid Society for over 20 years. My commitment and service is directly linked back to you. I appreciate you!

Thank you! Stay safe,
Samantha Smalls '00
Legal Aid Society
smalls.samantha@gmail.com

Amanda Shapiro '15

It was your leadership in the Sparer program, and your academic focus on civil rights, that made me apply to Brooklyn in the first place, and ultimately led me to choose Brooklyn for my law school education. This is a choice I am endlessly grateful for. Where fellow lawyers complain about the mundanity and needless competition of law school, I only look back on my law school experience fondly. Your leadership and teaching were no small part of that. The Sparer program molded me from a frustrated activist into a practicing civil rights lawyer, and your teaching in federal civil procedure and civil rights gave me a legal language to focus my activism, and opened my eyes to the intersectional nature of injustice. I wouldn't be a civil rights lawyer today if it hadn't been for your leadership in the Sparer program and your dedication to teaching the law as a tool for social change. In short: thank you, thank you.

In solidarity,
Amanda
Consulting Attorney, Sandulli Grace, P.C.
amandashap@gmail.com





Amy Hsieh '11

Thank you for leading the Sparer Public Interest Law Program all of these years. This important program not only allowed me to engage in a meaningful internship opportunity, but also created a space for me to explore complex societal issues for which legal tools can be summoned to bring about positive change. The experience of thinking critically as a Sparer fellow gave me a lens to better see and understand intersectional issues and challenges. The Sparer fellowship and the alumni community helped me to feel well prepared to advocate for more holistic approaches to care for people living with HIV around the world and survivors of commercial sexual exploitation. Thank you for this opportunity. As you move on to your next chapter, please know that your legacy will carry on through all of us Sparer fellows. Congratulations!

Warmly,
Amy Hsieh
Deputy Director, Anti-Trafficking Initiative, Sanctuary for Families
ahsieh@sffny.org

Sahr Muhammedally '02

I was a Sparer Fellow in 1999, which allowed me to work with Human Rights in China, based in NYC, and travel on their behalf for 6 weeks to China. I did research on how the Chinese Criminal Procedure law for the first time prohibited evidence procured through torture and examined fair trial procedures under international human rights law. I travelled to Shanghai, Wujan, Beijing, and Xian interviewing judges, prosecutors and defense lawyers. The research fed into a report by HRIC. The Sparer Fellowship allowed me to get in country field experience and strengthen my CV and interest in a career in international law. Prof Schneider received our ideas with interest and supported us in making decisions on suitable organizations to work with for our Fellowship and was always available for us as we navigated the fellowship. I hope she looks back at her commitments to nurture our budding interest in public interest law with pride at the success that many Sparer Fellows went onto accomplish.

Best,
Sahr Muhammedally
Director MENA & South Asia, Center for Civilians in Conflict
M: + 1917 640 3046 www.civiliansinconflict.org sahr@civiliansinconflict.org



Laurie Parise '04

It is hard for me to put into words how grateful I am to you for your support during my time at Brooklyn Law School and my life as a lawyer afterwards. I was so worried about what I would face being an older or what we now call “non-traditional” student, being accepted as a Sparer Fellow changed everything. Under your leadership, I felt part of a family, I knew I had found a home. Your guidance and belief in what could be accomplished no matter one’s circumstances gave me the courage to apply for fellowships and eventually start Youth Represent. I will always hold in my heart how you introduced me when I spoke on a panel at BLS. I only wish my Mom had been there to hear it! I have no doubt that you are going to do great and exciting things as you move into a new stage in life. After all you were the one who taught me you are never too old to dream new dreams. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all that you did for the students, the Sparer Fellows and me too. Onward!

With much love and gratitude,
Laurie
Managing Director, The Animation Project
laparise24@gmail.com

Fiona Oliphant '04

Thank you for all the support and guidance you provided while I attended BLS. I leveraged the lessons learned from you as an advocate, immigration attorney, program manager and executive director in the domestic/sexual violence sector for almost two decades. When I think of your other former students, I can't imagine the immeasurable impact that you have had in the movement to end violence against survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Words are insufficient to express my gratitude.

Best of wishes,
Fiona Oliphant '04
Co-Founder and Principal
Healing Equity United
Sparer Fellow
fiona_oliphant@hotmail.com

Sara Cate Ruff '20

As a recent graduate and Sparer alum, I wanted to tell you how much the Sparer program and community has meant to me, and to personally thank you for all your years of dedicated service to creating such a vital resource and community for BLS students. The Sparer fellowship allowed me to intern at BDS's Family Defense Practice last summer. This internship experience was one that impacted me profoundly, far beyond what I can adequately articulate at present. Additionally, it was an opportunity I would have never been capable of experiencing without the fellowship. Personally, but without getting too into it, my life circumstances and responsibilities drastically and unexpectedly changed since I first started law school. As a result, I currently won't have the ability to work full-time in the public interest sector post-grad as I had hoped, which makes my Sparer summer that much more meaningful to me, and is an experience that I genuinely cherish and am deeply grateful for. The Sparer community has also given me life-long friends and colleagues who I am grateful for and humbled by. I am so glad to know I will still be able to learn from and to be inspired by Sparers, even as I leave law school. Perhaps most importantly, this community and program has given me a passion to continue learning about the issues and injustices within our system, and a dedication to encourage and support my colleagues who are out lawyering on the public interest frontlines. All of that to say – from the bottom of my heart - thank you for both creating and tirelessly fostering a program which provides students opportunities and the vital, multi-faceted support necessary to pursue the absolutely crucial and incredibly difficult work in the public interest sector. You've cultivated and nurtured a truly special and inspiring community, and I am deeply honored to be a Sparer.

Sincerely,
Sara Cate Ruff
J.D. Candidate, 2020, Brooklyn Law School
(615) 881-2278





Bailee Brown '19

I would like to thank you for all your work and dedication as founder and Director of the Sparer Fellowship. While applying to BLS, it was the Sparer Fellowship that caught my attention and stood out as proof that this would be the best school for me. Thanks to the Sparer Fellowship, I met most of my friends during law school, joined a wonderful network of support both professionally and personally, and began my legal career in public service with a rewarding summer internship. Our lunches were always a bright spot that were the perfect mix of informative, engaging, and social. I know that the public service community at BLS wouldn't be as strong and thriving without the Sparer Fellowship, and it is our commitment to and support of public service that made BLS such a positive educational environment. You have personally taught me so much and provided so many opportunities, and I will always maintain that Sparer was my favorite part of law school. Thank you so much for all you have done for the program, the school, and the students.

Best,
Bailee Brown
Excelsior Service Fellow
NYS Department of Health
baileembrown@gmail.com

Dana B. Wolfe '12

It would be impossible to overstate how important the Sparer Fellowship and the Sparer community has been to me. Thanks to the Sparer Program, I entered Brooklyn Law School with a ready cohort of friendly, committed, like-minded classmates and professors. The Sparer lunches were a welcome respite from the rigors and stresses of law school—a special place where we could all gather together, share a meal, update on our work or trying to land a public interest internship, learn from an outside speaker, and engage with professors. Returning for the Sparer Forum each year has kept me connected with Brooklyn Law School and continued to educate me on emergent issues. I absolutely credit the Sparer Program with helping me stay focused on the reason that I went to law school in the first place—to pursue public interest law—which I am fortunate to do every day as a public defender. And I would be remiss if I failed to mention that nearly all of my closest friends from Brooklyn Law School—friends with whom I remain in near daily contact—were people I met through the Sparer Fellowship. I am so grateful to you for creating this incredible space and opportunity for us. I wish you all the best in your new adventures and hope to see you at a Sparer Forum in the future.

Warmly
Dana Wolfe '12
danabwolfe@gmail.com

Clinton Hughes '97

I am the Forensic DNA Attorney at Brooklyn Defender Services. I have been a public defender for 23 years — or since I graduated from Brooklyn Law in 1997. For the last seven years, I have specialized in Forensic DNA defense practice, and I have been at the forefront of litigation in this area of the law. I am also a '96 Sparer Alum. I owe much to Professor Elizabeth Schneider for her championing of public interest and public service through the Edward V. Sparer Public Interest Law Program. Sparer wasn't about scoring support for a single summer internship. It was about growing a community of lawyers to bend the practice to achieve the greater good. It was about normalizing public interest at Brooklyn Law School. I remember and keep in touch with several of my Sparer Fellows. And I fondly remember Professor Schneider, both in the classroom and as a leader of the program.

Be well, Liz, and prosper.

Clinton Hughes

Forensic DNA Attorney Brooklyn Defender Services

177 Livingston St, 5th Floor, Brooklyn NY 11201

T: 347-452-4639 chughes@bds.org



Lee Wellington '13

A few reflections on Professor Schneider. Her passion for her work is truly contagious. She is a scholar in every sense. I admired both her publications and lectures, always so natural and accessible. I often felt as if just the two of us were having a conversation, even as she spoke to packed rooms in class or at Sparer events- she has that magic in the way she expresses herself. I can remember the stacks of papers piled on her desk and the articles and books she would eagerly share with us as we chatted in her office. She is always eager to find new applications to issues we were wrestling with in class- I think back to conversations we had about language used to warn people of misconduct on the subways. And Liz is a connector- strongly advocating for her students at every turn. She grounded us in the wonder of public interest work and empowered us to run full force in the direction of our own passions. For me that was community development, and she gave me the space within the Sparer program to bring in speakers on a range of topics- community gardens, recovery post-Sandy, environmental justice. Those events made Brooklyn Law feel like a home for me- and Liz made my BLS community feel like family. She continues to be an anchor for me, well after my time at BLS and I will forever value our relationship- as a professor, mentor and friend.

Warmly,
Lee
Executive Director, Urban Manufacturing Alliance
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Riti Singh '12

I am a 2012 graduate of Brooklyn Law School, and currently work as a Staff Attorney in the Appeals Unit of The Legal Aid Society, Juvenile Rights Practice. My time in the Sparer Public Interest Law Program was formative, as it gave me a community of law students, professors, and practicing attorneys who also saw a career in the law as a call to service. It provided a continual sense of inspiration, as I learned from the Sparer community the many paths I could pursue as someone interested in working specifically with children and families. Advice from Sparer Fellows helped me land an internship at The Legal Aid Society the summer before my 3L year, which helped me secure a position as a staff attorney upon graduating. I am so grateful to Professor Schneider for leading the program for 35 years, and wish her all the best going forward.

Riti Singh '12
Staff Attorney, Legal Aid Society
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Olga Vlasova '13

It is hard to believe that it has been ten years since I first set my foot at Brooklyn Law School. I recall that first orientation week at the end of August 2010, attending lectures and trying to feel excited rather than intimidated, inspired rather than overwhelmed. Feeling the pressure, realizing how little I knew and how much I had to learn. Yet, when I came to Professor Schneider's class, Civil Procedure, I immediately felt like I belonged in that class. The first assignment was to read "Buffalo Creek Disaster," and I loved that book. It was a great way to get introduced to the subject matter of Civil Procedure. Professor Schneider made this class engaging and thought provoking. She challenged all of us to dig deeper, "grapple" with the issues and produce meaningful analysis of the legal issues rather than a simplistic issue-spotter narrative. I loved that "let's grapple" approach, so CivPro was by far my favorite class during the first year of law school. In my second and third years, I had the honor and privilege to take other classes taught by Professor Schneider. Professor Schneider challenged all of us to think harder, analyze better, and see the nuances and challenges for every legal issue that we discussed. I always felt that this was exactly what legal education was all about. I also felt grateful to have had these amazing opportunities to explore the issues that I was interested in, e.g., women and the law, domestic violence. As the Sparer Fellow, I interned at one of the prominent nonprofit organizations, "Sanctuary for Families," where I was able to help numerous women who were survivors of domestic violence. All of this would not be possible if not for Professor Schneider's stewardship of the Edward V. Sparer Public Interest Law Program and her dedication to the public interest work and women's issues. Professor Schneider, I know I am biased, but you are my favorite professor at Brooklyn Law School. I cherish the memories of the many amazing conversations and discussions. You helped us all to become better lawyers and better human beings. Your book, "Women and the Law Stories" is still on my desk, within my reach every day. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for being part of my legal journey. Thank you for being that beacon of light and wisdom that has stayed with me all these years.

Olga Vlasova '13

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Alex Lesman '05

I wish you the best as you move on to the next chapter, having served the Sparer program so passionately for so long. The depth of your caring for public interest law and the students who were training for it was always manifest. And I will never forget your enthusiasm at the on-campus performance of The Vagina Monologues. Clearly not an ivory tower dweller!

With great respect and appreciation,
Alex Lesman '05

Staff Attorney, Special Litigation Unit, The Legal Aid Society
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Jen Sinton '98

As a student seeking to further social, economic, and racial justice, it was often difficult to feel at home in the law school community. Liz Schneider worked very hard to counteract that by holding space for us and by emphatically championing our potential as new lawyers, our ability to effect meaningful change, and the causes that moved us. I will never forget sitting in her women and the law class, reading together so many terrible court decisions, a few of us dumbfounded by their unfairness. Liz led us through all of this, offering clarity rather than obfuscation. And she shared her personal history of entering a profession dominated by men and the powerful interests that subjugate and oppress people. I cherished Liz's raw honesty and am so grateful that my 20-something self had Liz in her corner and the support of the Sparer program and community. I'm not normally so emotional, but this week we lost Anne Fleming, my former colleague at the Foreclosure Prevention Project of South Brooklyn Legal Services, who went on to become a wonderful scholar of the legal histories of poverty and debt and a professor of law at Georgetown University. I don't know if Liz and Anne ever crossed paths, but I will always be inspired by both women and their powerful contributions to the legal field and their searches for justice.

Jen Sinton '98
Deputy director of the Foreclosure Prevention Project
South Brooklyn Legal Services
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Elizabeth Kane

Congratulations on all you've accomplished for Brooklyn Law School, the Sparer program, and everyone who's participated in the program. Your efforts and leadership have been an inspiration, and the program has done so much for so many. Best wishes for your Sparer retirement, and all the other wonderful things I expect you will be doing from now on. In these dark and complicated times it is important—if not life saving—to keep in mind the good one has accomplished. I hope you take great pride and comfort from seeing first hand that the world is a better place for your part in it.

Warm hugs (masked and six feet apart),
Betsy
elizabeth.kane500@gmail.com

Rebecca Gannon '14

The Sparer Program meant so much to me when I was at Brooklyn Law. Like many Sparers, the program was a significant factor in attracting me to BLS in the first place. I was the only person in my family to navigate applying to law school, much less figuring out where and how to go with an eye toward becoming a “public interest lawyer,” and it seemed overwhelming and confusing. The Sparer Program stood out when I was looking at schools. I was so lucky to get into the Sparer Program as an incoming student. I still believe it was a bit of a fluke that I got in that early! But if it was, I'm at least confident I've proven myself since then. Sparer was what gave my first year meaning. I honestly believe that it was so much easier to enjoy the material and not feel lost in my huge 1L classes since I had a reason and a purpose for attending law school that was beyond simply becoming “a lawyer” – but rather, a certain type of lawyer. I credit that purpose for my success in law school and certainly for my ability to survive that first year. I would be reminded of that purpose every time I escaped my giant first year cohort, ascended to the 10th Floor, and breathed a sigh of relief as I joined like minded students for Sparer lunches. The Program also gave me my first and some of my closest friends. Somehow six years have passed since I graduated law school and I am lucky enough to work alongside some of those friends, call on them for help for my clients and to share some of their wisdom, and see the amazing work they do and the dedication that still sustains them years on. Having access to professors and faculty members was also invaluable. It kept me from being a faceless name in a sea of law students and enabled me to see the many possible careers and directions a public interest lawyer could take. And most importantly, it made the program feel like a true home. Over my three years at BLS, when I would wander the halls looking for a professor for office hours, invariably a Sparer faculty member would spot me and ask how I was and start up a chat. It is impossible to imagine what my law school experience would have been like without the program and what kind of lawyer I would have been without it. I am forever appreciative of the community you have built and welcomed me into.

Best,
Rebecca Gannon '14
Staff Attorney, Appellate Advocates
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Julie F. Kay '95

Well before I arrived at Brooklyn Law School in 1992, I was lured by the idea of a law school where she was a leading faculty member who focused on gender rights (!), public interest law and led a program for students to develop their practice. Liz and the Sparer Program delivered even more than had been promised. There was a sense of community and support for public interest lawyering and for women's rights that fed so many of us. Liz was at its core and brought many people along. Liz's intellect, creative strategizing and her successful gender equity initiatives continue to be an inspiration to me. Her strong mentoring and taking time to support for lawyers in the pipeline is something I have benefitted from since law school and have tried to emulate ever since. I remain so grateful for what Liz has done for me personally, for the many public interest law students she has sculpted and embraced in to the public interest fold and for the legal reforms she led that have benefited so many, many people in the wider world.

Julie
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Anna Hanke '18

Thank you so much for your mentorship and leadership in the Sparer program. I chose to matriculate at BLS because of its public interest programs—being a Sparer fellow enriched my law school experience, and I have carried this emphasis on pro bono into my current practice. Thank you for cultivating a law school culture and alumni community that promotes and celebrates public interest work.

All the best,
Anna R. Hanke
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Susan J. Feathers

As one of the first directors of the Brooklyn Public Interest Program, I had the opportunity to work closely with Professor Schneider, on the many aspects of the Sparer Program, including the summer selection committee, and the Annual Colloquium. Professor Schneider has been a tireless champion of promoting public interest in Brooklyn and the wider community. She galvanized faculty members, alumni, and key community partners, in developing a pioneering, program, that brings well-deserved recognition to Brooklyn Law, while also making an enduring contribution to the access to justice community. She is a visionary and a tireless advocate for social justice, within the academy and in broader practice. Since I left Brooklyn, my work with Liz has continued to inspire and inform my work, which has included serving as the directors at Yale, Stanford, Penn, and now Rutgers Law. In many ways, the "blueprint," for my own work, derived from my work with Professor Schneider, and in all of my positions, I have strived to develop broader and deeper support to students pursuing public interest, while also, integrating social justice into the core academic experience. Liz Schneider's unique blend of renowned scholars, devoted teacher, and institution builder, is truly unique. Brooklyn Law is a better institution because of her leadership, as are many generations of Brooklyn Law students. I feel fortunate to have worked with her and remain indebted to her, for the critical role she played early in my career.



Susan J. Feathers
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Shari Gruber '98

Congratulations on 35 years of leading the Sparer Public Interest Law Program. The Sparer program is what attracted me to Brooklyn Law School and I was absolutely crushed the first two times that I applied and was not accepted. But the third time was the charm and I was very fortunate to use my funding in 1997 to conduct policy and research on juvenile justice issues at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa. It was the experience of a lifetime but perhaps the biggest takeaway for me was that I decided to change my focus from international child welfare to domestic issues. I am pleased to say that I have remained in the public sector the entire 22 years since my graduation from Brooklyn Law School, including the past 15 years at NYC's Administration for Children's Services. I am now an Assistant Commissioner at ACS overseeing policy and compliance for pre-preventive services, including the city's child care assistance program. This summer, I have thought back to my Sparer fellowship, more so than I have in many years. I think about how to apply the lessons that I learned during my Sparer fellowship about social justice and how wrong I was about the status of racial issues in my own country. But I also think about the incredible sense of hope and possibility that I felt in South Africa at that time and how I can bring that to my own professional and volunteer work. Thank you for contributing so meaningfully to my public service career and many others.

Best wishes for your future endeavors.
Shari Gruber '98, Sparer Fellow, 1997
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Leslie Kramer '00

I was awarded a Edward V. Sparer Public Interest Fellowship during the summer of 2019 to work at the National Center for Youth Law in San Francisco, California. That opportunity showed me how lawyers can make a huge difference in the lives of families by doing more than just litigating individual cases. I observed lawyers working on policy and legislative matters, class action lawsuits, and public awareness. I learned that significant changes are possible when committed people continually work at implementing that change over time. And I met so many good people. Thank you so much Professor Schneider for leading the Edward V. Sparer Fellowship Program to make sure that Brooklyn Law students have the opportunity to work with wonderful organizations to achieve change and better understand what they want to do upon graduation. You have made a huge difference in the lives of so many students and the clients they were able to help as part of the fellowship. I wish you the very best in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,
Leslie Kramer
Law Clerk, U.S. Magistrate Judge Timothy R. Rice
lkramer14@yahoo.com

Paul Zimmerman '93

As an incoming 1L in August 1990, I walked into the interview room as part of the selection process to be a Sparer Fellow. Along with several others, there you were, smiling, welcoming, and ready to engage in a discussion with a 24-year old with some notions about what he wanted to do with a law degree but still very green around the gills. I remember that interview quite clearly, and how you asked probing questions while making me feel respected and taking my half-baked ideas seriously. After being accepted as an incoming Sparer Fellow and with a few weeks of law school under my belt, I immediately saw that the value of the Fellowship, much more than the summer stipend (which was actually very important in its own right) was the camaraderie among the network of Fellows and the Sparer Committee members, and the real support for pursuing public interest work. Without those factors, one's initial reasons for going to law school can slip away all too easily during the personally transformative process of the three years of law school. I thought to myself, "this network of support Liz has created is what will make all the difference for me." It was this realization that led me to co-found BLSPI, so that other law students could also benefit from being part of a larger cohort of people dedicated to using their degrees to advance the public good and social justice. So that is one of the legacies of your Sparer work as well. Liz, thank you for the many things great and small you have done for me and all other Sparers over these years. You are greatly appreciated, and you will be missed.

Warmly,
Paul
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Andrea Sharrin '90

Congratulations on founding such an important program followed by an amazing tenure as its chair. I've carried the values of Edward V. Sparer as conveyed through your teachings and leadership to every job and volunteer effort I've had throughout my career in the public and private sectors. I count myself among the many lucky former students who could not have asked for a better foundation or mentor.

Thank you.

Andrea Sharrin

Managing Director

Head of Financial Crime Compliance for the Americas and Global IB, Barclays

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Ross D. Levi '97

A Sparer Program without Liz Schnieder? It doesn't seem possible. The two are almost synonymous in my head. Liz always brought her formidable smarts, passion, dedication and warmth to the program, which I got to witness as a Fellow and member of the selection committee, and after graduation as a Sparer panelist and supporter. Liz did something rare and wonderful: she created a true community. The friendships I made through the Sparer program were some of the strongest I made in law school. I still proudly wear the badge of Sparer Fellow all these years later, and I attribute a great deal of the strength of the program directly to her. BLS is lucky to have had Liz as steward of this vital program for so many years. Although I know the solid foundation she created will endure, it is a huge loss to the school. Alas, all things must evolve, and Liz has well earned the chance to take the next new step on her journey. All the best to Liz Schnieder! I hope she takes great pride in the immeasurable impact she has had and the amazing legacy she has left.

With gratitude,
Ross D. Levi '97,
entering Sparer 1994-95
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