

Miami Scholars Class of 2012

Cristina Berrios

Upon completing her Bachelors degree with a major in Economics and a minor in Legal Studies at the University of Central Florida, Cristina Berrios continued her education at UCF, earning a Masters in Public Administration. Throughout her studies, she has demonstrated a commitment to public service, making time to volunteer with various public and non-profit organizations, aiding the homeless, mobilizing youth in politics, and consistently providing quality HIV/AIDS services. Prior to commencing her graduate studies, Cristina worked for a private firm where she gained major insight into legal writing and research. This experience led Cristina to establish new professional goals - after graduation from law school, she plans to work within government to develop positive legal solutions to inefficiencies affecting the under-represented. As a law student, Cristina is a member of the Public Interest Leadership Board and she is a volunteer for the Indigent Defense Pro Bono Project at the Miami Dade County Office of the Public Defender.

Kathryn D. Demarco

Kathryn graduated from the University of Texas with a major in Hispanic Linguistics and a minor in Arabic. Prior to attending law school, Kathryn worked as a teacher in Riobamba, Ecuador. During law school, she has continued to seek out public interest opportunities. Kathryn worked as an intern with the University of Miami Immigration Clinic and with the Department of Homeland Security. She also worked as a judicial intern in the Chambers of Magistrate Judge Edwin G. Torres, and during her last semester, she will work as an intern in the Narcotics Division of the United States Attorney's Office. Kathryn has been active with both moot court and with the University of Miami Law Review. She competed in the Pace International Criminal Competition in The Hague, Netherlands and received a best oralist award. This past semester, she also competed in the San Diego Criminal Procedure Tournament.

Stephen Heymann

Stephen began his commitment to service as an undergraduate at UM prior to law school. He organized the first youth group for his local Red Cross, serving as President and founding member. Along with twenty other students, he was trained to assist with disaster response. Before long, Stephen was forced to apply his newly-acquired skills when four successive hurricanes hit Florida. His experiences volunteering during Hurricanes Frances, Jeanne, Ivan, Charley and Katrina have resonated with Stephen. Specifically, they have solidified his conviction to attend law school and engage in public service by aiding those facing great adversity. Stephen was recognized by the Governor of Florida with the Points of Light Award, Florida's highest award for volunteer service. As a Miami Scholar, Stephen is on the Public Interest Leadership Board.

Valerie Lewis

While volunteering at The Village, a Miami rehabilitation facility for drug and alcohol dependent individuals, Valerie Lewis was inspired to pursue a career in public service. She interacted with mothers who had lost custody of their children, and needed support and assistance in navigating the legal system. Realizing these women are faced with many barriers, including limited resources at their disposal, Valerie hopes her legal education can help them in a profound and concrete way. While her public service work in Miami is significant, it is only part of a lifelong effort to help others. In addition to teaching in Santo Domingo, Valerie worked with local Girl Scouts to promote education about HIV/AIDS and volunteered at an AIDS clinic in Madrid, Spain during her study-abroad experience. Equipped with her education and career experience, Valerie feels it is her "moral obligation to protect those who are less fortunate or simply less informed through our legal system." As a law student, Valerie is a member of the Public Interest Leadership Board.

Amanda Liepold

As a volunteer in the Youth Health Program in Tanzania, Amanda Liepold implemented and managed a sexual reproductive health education program in two rural villages within the epicenter of the AIDS pandemic in Tanzania. Working with school and community leaders, Amanda coordinated relief of the community health issues in the region by implementing targeted seminars and outreach efforts. In addition, she also worked as a fundraiser for Student Partnership Worldwide USA, a program that redresses issues relating to a lack of sexual health information, opportunities for young people and gaps in resources. Through fundraising efforts and educational outreach initiatives, Amanda was able to directly assist with programming proliferation. In addition to her work in Tanzania, Amanda has demonstrated a commitment to service through work on the Kerry campaign, her internship with State Senator Taylor (D-Wisc) and student leadership in Alternative Spring Break programs. She is currently a member of the Public Interest Leadership Board at Miami Law.

Liam McGivern

Liam McGivern has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to human rights and the defense of society's most marginalized sectors. As a student at the University of Washington, Liam earned a Global Studies Degree, with a minor in Human Rights. This emphasis has allowed him to investigate and appreciate the diverse issues facing the international community. His insights were highlighted at the UW Undergraduate Research Symposium, where he received the 2008 UW Library Research Award for a multimedia presentation entitled Justice Denied: Impunity During and After the Salvadoran Civil War. His achievements also include leading a human rights action group, participating in the Pacific Sociological Association and publishing work in the UW Department of Comparative History of Ideas Journal. As a Miami Law student, Liam is a Public Interest Leadership Board member.

Elizabeth Rieser-Murphy

After graduating from the University of Delaware, where she earned a BA in International Relations, Elizabeth Reiser-Murphy joined the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, a national and international program dedicated to working with marginalized individuals and groups by providing essential services and education. Based in four core values, social justice, simple living, community and spirituality, the Jesuit Volunteer Corps provided an opportunity for Elizabeth to engage in hands-on work for those most in need. After her time with JVC, Elizabeth went to New York University and earned her Masters in Education. Elizabeth has a demonstrated commitment to social responsibility and looks forward to exploring coursework and field opportunities in the public interest. She is currently a member of the Public Interest Leadership Board and a volunteer for the Indigent Defense Pro Bono Project at the Miami Dade County Office of the Public Defender.

Allison Saperstein

As a student majoring in History and Political Science at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, the idea of law school was always a viable option for Allison Saperstein. It wasn't until she took a class on the Arab-Israeli Conflict, however, that she understood the exact path she wanted to take in terms of her legal education. It was in this class that Allison became fascinated with human rights law and the way in which a legal education could provide her the opportunity to advocate for individuals' most basic human and civil rights. Her interest in public service, specifically, was inspired by the volunteer work she performed at Safe House, a non-profit organization dedicated to assisting victims of domestic violence. These experiences led her to seek employment, first at the Circuit Court of Baltimore City and later at the U.S. Department of Justice-Civil Rights. Now as a Miami Law student, Allison is a member of the Public Interest Leadership Board and a volunteer for the Pro Bono Project at the Miami Dade County Office of the Public Defender.