

## Profiles of the 2015 Outstanding Women Law Student Awardees of the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan Foundation



### **Mikyia Aaron, WLAM Foundation Scholar at University of Detroit Mercy School of Law**

Mikyia is a third year law student who has dedicated herself to diversifying the student population and increasing minority representation in the legal profession. She is an active member of the Black Law Students Association, who has participated in an innovative program introducing minority eleventh and twelfth grade students to the law and effective advocacy skills. Mikyia's dedication to both diversity and the evolution of legal scholarship became evident to the entire faculty and student body on February 3, 2014 when she became the first African American law student to be appointed as Editor-in-Chief of the UDM Law Review journal.

Mikyia will be practicing in the Labor & Employment group at Clark Hill PLC after graduation.



### **Samantha Hall, Kimberly M. Cahill Scholar at the University of Michigan Law School**

Sami is a Kansas City, Missouri native and a third-year law student who graduated from the University of Missouri in 2012 with majors in political science and international studies. Since coming to law school, she has spent one summer working at a plaintiff-side labor and employment firm, and another summer working at the National Women's Law Center. During her second year of law school she served as a student attorney in Michigan Law's Human Trafficking Clinic, where she provided direct legal services to survivors of labor and sex trafficking. She has also served as the Student Note Coordinator for the Michigan Journal of Gender & Law and has participated in two pro bono spring break trips. Upon graduation, she hopes to use her law degree and her experience to advocate for women, specifically women of color, immigrant women, and women of lower socioeconomic status.



### **Leah Hurvitz, Dickinson Wright Women's Network Scholar at Michigan State University College of Law**

After graduating from the James Madison College at Michigan State University, Leah spent a year working on Capitol Hill and on a Congressional campaign. Leah is most interested in ensuring the female voice is represented in politics. Since starting law school, Leah has served a recent externship with the Democratic House Policy Staff and a Clerkship with the Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services. During the summer of 2014, Leah worked for an intellectual property law firm in the Detroit area and the US House Judiciary Committee in Washington DC. She also serves on the board of the Jewish Legal Society and is a Team Leader for the

Michigan State International Law Review. This semester Leah published an article about copyright law in the Michigan State International Law Review. Leah plans to stay in Michigan to work either on political and policy matters or in the legal field of intellectual property.



**Charlotte Johnson, General Motors Scholar at Wayne State University Law School**

Charlotte, a single mother of a young teen-aged son, is the first in her immediate family to attend college. Originally from Florida, she has lived on her own since age sixteen and supported herself and her son while pursuing an undergraduate degree from Valdosta University. Charlotte earned her Master's in Urban and Regional Planning at Virginia Tech, where she was a Housing and Urban & Development (HUD) Fellow, working with local groups developing area affordable housing projects. For the past 12 years, Charlotte has worked with various municipal and private entities to provide assistance and housing to low-income persons. She has helped to redevelop over 1000 units of affordable, assisted housing in Michigan and spent the last 5 years administering the Housing Choice Voucher Program for the Detroit Housing Commission, which provides approximately \$35M a year in rental assistance to local qualified, low-income households. Charlotte plans to help others by dedicating her legal career to the areas of public interest, human rights, and civil rights.



**Sabrina Rewald, WLAM Foundation Scholar at University of Detroit Mercy School of Law**

Since graduating from the University of Toronto, Sabrina has been pursuing a Dual J.D. from the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law and University of Windsor Law. She spent her first summer interning with the Sugar Law Center for Economic and Social Justice in Detroit, as well as with the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights in Warsaw, Poland. She has also served as an intern for the Africa Regional Office for the Center for Reproductive Rights, and as a teaching assistant and a junior member of Moot Court at UDM. Sabrina currently serves as student chair of the UDM Voice for Justice Auction and as founder of a chapter of Law Students for Reproductive Justice. Sabrina plans to work in reproductive rights after graduation.



**Miriam Schachter, General Motors Scholar at University of Michigan Law School**

After graduating from Columbia University, Miriam spent two years teaching elementary English in Kansas City, MO, through Teach for America. Since coming to law school she has continued her commitment to children and families, interning with the Juvenile Rights Practice at the Legal Aid Society in New York City during the summer of 2014. Miriam was a student attorney in the Child Welfare Appellate Clinic during the fall semester of this year and currently is a student attorney in the Juvenile Justice Clinic. She has served on the board of the Michigan chapter of Law Students for Reproductive Justice as the Pro Bono Chair and is the president of the Michigan Immigration and Labor Law Association. Miriam plans to work in public interest family law after graduation and will be interning with the Family Defense Team at the Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem this summer.



**Heather Spielmaker, General Motors Scholar at Western Michigan University Cooley Law School**

Heather entered the legal community in Michigan nearly a decade ago as Director of the Center for Ethics, Service, and Professionalism at Cooley. While running the school's pro bono programming, Heather was recognized by the Department of Military and Veteran's Affairs with the Legion of Merit Award for creating one of the largest military pro bono programs in the country, and helped organize and publish two judge's guides involving the unique legal needs of military service members. Prior to beginning law school, Heather served as a City Councilwoman in Charlotte, Michigan. Heather is a co-founder and secretary of the State Bar of Michigan's Military and Veteran's Law Section, chair of the Mildred B. Erickson Fellowship at MSU, a nominee reviewer for the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame, and a grant reviewer for Capital Area United Way. She is looking forward to working this summer at Dickinson Wright's Lansing office, as a summer associate.



**Karen Wentz, WLAM Foundation Scholar at Western Michigan University Cooley Law School**

Karen graduated from Madonna University in 2012 with a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice, has been employed for 9 years with the Oakland County Courts, and is currently clerking for the Oakland Circuit Judge Michael Warren. Karen strongly believes in supporting her community and causes that are important to her. She has raised funds for nonprofit organizations and has volunteered her time with Common Ground Legal Aid Clinic and Care House as a Court Appointed Special Advocate. Karen is currently working with WMU Cooley Law School and Avondale High School to implement the Student Court Program, which supports students through peacemaking. Her most rewarding experiences have come through her opportunities to mentor young women. Karen would like to use her law degree to continue advocating and empowering young men and women to achieve their goals.



**Paula Willuweit, General Motors Scholar at Michigan State University College of Law**

Paula graduated from Michigan State University with bachelor's degrees in both Social Relations and Policy and Women and Gender Studies. While attending MSU Law, she is also pursuing a Masters in Social Work and a certificate in Child and Family Advocacy. Paula has worked as an intern at the Women's Center of Greater Lansing, and in the Eaton County Family Court. She is currently a student clinician working with families through the Chance at Childhood Legal Clinic. This summer, Paula will work on the Domestic Violence Team for the Legal Aid Society in Chicago, IL, and plans to pursue a legal career working with families and children upon graduation.



**Ashley Zacharski, Dawn Van Hoek Scholar at Wayne State University Law School**

Ashley graduated from Michigan State University in 2013 with a degree in Political Science. As an undergraduate student, she worked as a political organizer and served on the executive board of the MSU Pre-Law Society. During her first year at Wayne Law, she mentored students at Cody High School in Detroit as they completed research projects about their communities. Ashley received a Public Interest Law Fellowship for her work as a case manager at the Solution Oriented Domestic Violence Prevention Court. While at the Domestic Violence Court, Ashley worked with family court judges and domestic violence survivors obtaining personal protection orders. She also serves as an Article Editor for Wayne Law School's Journal of Law in Society. Following graduation, Ashley is interested in serving as an advocate for children and continuing her work with domestic violence survivors.