

Talking Points: Shania Bunbury

2020 CHARLES J. BEARD, II DIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT

Harvard Law School student Shania Bunbury has been selected as a recipient of Foley Hoag's 2020 Charles J. Beard, II Diversity Fellowship. Shania received her Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of Vermont, where she worked as a research assistant on matters concerning racial disparities in the criminal legal system. At Harvard Law, Shania is active in student organizations such as Defenders, the Prison Legal Assistance Project, and the Black Law Students Association. Starting in Fall 2020, she will join the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau, to work as a student attorney serving indigent clients in Massachusetts. In this interview, Shania reflects on her time as a summer associate at the firm.



Shania Bunbury

Why did you want to become a lawyer?

My experience with racial discrimination at all levels, from interpersonal to institutional, has shown me that individuals can make lasting impacts on entire systems. I believe that marginalized and underserved communities, those that are often most impacted by inequality, deserve excellent legal representation from attorneys who can empathize with their unique circumstances. Unfortunately, these communities are habitually excluded from the narrative, and those that need legal aid most lack the resources for it. Access to the legal system is a form of freedom that has been denied to many for too long. By becoming a lawyer, I can do my part in fighting this deep inequity.

What do you hope to gain from your experience at Foley Hoag?

My main goal is to become a better advocate for clients now and in the future. Everyone throughout the firm — from deeply appreciated legal assistants to the managing partners— truly wants me to succeed at all levels. This includes anything from rigorous first-hand legal experience, to developing relationships with colleagues and clients. Another hope of mine entering the summer associate program was to find community within Foley Hoag, which I can confidently say I have.

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What do you hope to contribute to Foley Hoag through this Fellowship?

Throughout my summer at Foley Hoag, I have met with a number of attorneys who had strong relationships with Charles J. Beard, II, whom this Fellowship is named after. His commitment to civil rights and racial equity lives on in Foley Hoag's culture. My hope is that my presence allows me to contribute a unique voice, rooted in my background and experiences, which demonstrates that same commitment lives on in me as well.

What do you envision for your future law career?

Foley Hoag is an exceptional law firm to be at, and has already provided me with the experience of working on multiple facets of my legal interests. Alongside traditional assignments, both on the litigation and transactional side, I have been able to get involved in multiple matters concerning civil rights and the criminal legal system. In my future law career, it is important that I center those who are often left out of discussions concerning equity and justice, which is why I am so glad to be at a firm like Foley Hoag.

Why is advocating for people's rights important to you?

We should always be asking ourselves, "what is our legal system if it is not equitable for everyone?" Being a law student at Harvard and a summer associate at Foley Hoag affords me privileges that people who look like me seldom have. I want to ensure that with every elevation I experience, I am reaching out to those who have uplifted me. Deeply rooted in my commitment to advocating for people's rights, I am intent on honoring those who came before me by creating space for those who come after me.

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