



The Francis D. Murnaghan, Jr. Appellate Advocacy Fellowship

Statement from 2022-2023 Murnaghan Appellate Advocacy Fellow Hayley Hahn

The Francis D. Murnaghan Appellate Advocacy Fellowship provides law clerks with the rare opportunity to practice appellate law that advances the public interest.

During my fellowship year, I served as lead counsel for the Appellate Advocacy Project at the Public Justice Center (PJC). The PJC's Legal Director provided supervision and support, empowering me to take ownership of case monitoring and management. I authored merits and *amicus* briefs in state and federal appellate courts, and presented oral argument before Maryland's appellate courts, including two before Maryland's Supreme Court.

I also gained exposure to a broad range of civil rights issues. This included exploration of predatory mortgage fees in *Clair*, state whistleblower protections in *Romeka*, and implicit bias in asylum proceedings in *Tegwi*, among many others.

The Murnaghan Fellowship allowed me to hone my legal research and writing skills. For example, both *Dejene*, an unemployment insurance case, and *Doe*, a case centered on employment protections for LGBTQ+ workers, presented opportunities to engage with canons of statutory interpretation. Similarly, *Rowe*, which centered on anti-discrimination protections in public accommodations, and *In re M.P.*, a juvenile justice appeal, each presented the chance to learn about technical jurisdictional issues. In this way, the Murnaghan Fellowship enabled me to develop a comprehensive set of advocacy tools.

Apart from the substantive work, through the Murnaghan Fellowship, I formed many meaningful interpersonal connections. Appellate work is often solitary; however, the Fellowship provided a tremendous sense of community. From our courageous clients, whose tenacity and grit continually inspired me, to other members of the PJC and broader public interest community, the people I met over the course of the Fellowship enriched my personal and professional life. I look forward to continuing to cultivate these relationships.

The Murnaghan Fellowship allowed me to develop the competence and confidence to pursue a career as a public interest attorney. I look forward to applying the lessons I learned as a Fellow in my future work. I can think of no better way to start one's public interest career than as the Murnaghan Fellow.