

Elizabeth McIntyre

It is hard to imagine that Elizabeth McIntyre had not always planned on attending law school. She first studied journalism at the University of Missouri, where she helped people tell their stories of rural poverty over the radio. She realized, though, that she wanted to do more than tell stories; she wanted to help rewrite them. After three years of law school at Boston University, Ms. McIntyre has indeed changed the poverty narrative, both in the lives of her individual clients and in her policy work with several advocacy organizations.

Immediately upon entering Boston University Law School, she started volunteering at Lift, a neighborhood center where indigent persons can receive help across a range of social services. Ms. McIntyre became a one-stop shop for her clients, helping them apply for housing, healthcare, and nutritional assistance while also serving as the hub to communicate with their attorneys, case managers, and social workers.

Applying what she learned at LIFT, she spent her first summer of law school at Greater Boston Legal Services in the public benefits unit. She helped many low income clients get back on their feet that summer. One such client, an elderly woman who was undergoing chemotherapy, was denied subsidized housing because of an unpaid telephone bill. But after Ms. McIntyre appeared at an administrative hearing and made several telephone calls on her client's behalf, the local housing authority reversed its denial. The client was so thrilled that she brought Ms. McIntyre a thank-you gift -- a beautiful vase. Ms. McIntyre graciously declined the generous gift over great protest, but when she returned to her desk, she got a telephone call from reception. There was a package waiting for her, the once-rejected vase. This was one argument she could not win. Ms. McIntyre ultimately accepted the wonderful gift and donated it to the Boston University Public Interest Auction, which raises money for public

interest student fellowships, allowing other students to experience what she had at GBLS.

In her second year of law school, Ms. McIntyre volunteered at the walk-in legal clinic at Shelter Legal Services, which assists homeless families and low-income military veterans with all manner of civil legal issues. Ms. McIntyre completed intakes, helped to identify legal issues, provided counseling, and filed appeals for denials of cash and food assistance. She was so respected by the leadership of the organization that they soon selected her to manage the clinic on her own when they could not attend.

As a third-year student, Ms. McIntyre showed no signs of slowing down. She interned with the Victim Rights Law Center, which is dedicated exclusively to the legal needs of sexual assault victims. During her time there, she helped represent a survivor who was sued for violating an apartment lease. The argument that she crafted relied upon a state law that allows victims of gender based violence to break a lease in

order to avoid further danger; the court held that the client was not liable for any unpaid rent.

It will come as no surprise to you that, with this pro bono track record, Ms. McIntyre graduated law school with the highest number of pro bono hours of anyone in her class. Carolyn Goodwin, Boston University Law School's Director of Public Service and Pro Bono, calls Ms. McIntyre "an emerging leader in our legal community with an exceptional commitment to serving the poor and disadvantaged and the legal skills to make a difference."

Now a recent graduate, she works at Greater Boston Legal Services as an Equal Justice Works Fellow, sponsored by Staples and WilmerHale. Equal Justice Works provides paid fellowships that enable law school graduates to design and pursue unique public interest projects. Ms. McIntyre's work focuses on counteracting the "school to prison pipeline," the national trend wherein social and systemic factors lead children out of school and into the criminal justice system. She

represents children in school discipline and special education proceedings, and helps them through MassHealth to receive access to full mental healthcare.

Ms. McIntyre has expanded the limits of what is possible in law school pro bono. Her legend no doubt will inspire other law students who might have wondered if they could do pro bono work and still excel in law school. And I think it is fair to say, since she is only one year out of law school, you ain't seen nothing yet.