

The Peggy Browning Fund Newsletter

Educating Law Students On The Rights And Needs Of Workers

Spring 2004

Joseph Lurie, President

Mary Anne Moffa, Executive Director

Honoring Those Who Made a Difference

By Joseph Lurie

The purpose of The Peggy Browning Fund is to educate law students about the rights and needs of workers. As part of this education, it is important to recognize those labor leaders and union-side labor lawyers who have spent their lives working to improve living standards and job security for all workers.

The road to economic and social justice is long and hard. The Peggy Browning Fund hopes that these inspiring honorees will help us pass the baton of desire to the next generation of those who will practice public interest labor law.

Our honorees have much in common with our Peggy Browning Fund Fellows and the students who attend our annual National Law Students Workers' Rights Conference. Our honorees decided on their life's work and embarked on a mission. They wanted to improve the economic and social position of



Left: Honoree Marvin Miller (former Executive Director, Major League Baseball Players Association), his wife Terri Miller, Lynn Williams (President Emeritus, USWA).

Photo by MAM



Above left: PBF Fellow Tamika Edwards and friend at PBF Dinner Dance. Above right: Honoree Wendell W. Young, III, President of UFCW Local 1776, at PBF Dinner Dance.

Photo by MAM



Photo by Bob Wolper



Photos by MAM

At our reception honoring Marvin Miller in NYC in January - Left: Don Fehr (Executive Director, MLBPA), Gene Eisner (Eisner and Associates). Below: (seated) Richard Trumka (Secretary-Treasurer, AFL-CIO), Gene Eisner; (at podium) Jim Bouton (noted author, speaker, former major league pitcher).

working people in our society. The lawyers we have honored believe this goal can be accomplished by representing the labor movement and working people. The labor leaders we have honored are convinced the goal can be achieved by creating strong labor unions to protect the rights of working people, provide them with fair wages, medical coverage, pension and other benefits a union contract affords.

Our honorees are heroes, models of inspiration to all. There are presently law students who dream of working in public interest labor law. Our honorees show them the way. We at The Peggy Browning Fund provide the opportunity.

The official registration and financial information of The Peggy Browning Fund may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

1818 Market Street, Suite 2300 Philadelphia, PA 19103 www.peggybrowningfund.org fax 215-564-2262 tel 215 665-1600

One Fellow's Experience

By Martin Milz, 2003 Peggy Browning Fellow



Photo by Bob Wolper

Marty Milz has just accepted a job offer from Spear, Wilderman.

I must begin by saying how truly grateful I am for having been given this opportunity by The Peggy Browning Fund. The practice of union-side labor and employment law has been my professional goal for many years. Upon entering law school, I became discouraged as

I realized the difficulties I faced in securing a job in this specialized field compared to my classmates who were content to step onto the neatly paved path to a job at a big firm. The Fund rescued me from the temptation to take that road.

I felt tremendous pressure at the outset, knowing that I would be the first legal intern at Sheet Metal Workers' Local 19, Ms. Browning's former client. Her shadow loomed large at Local 19, and there were several hardened old "tin knockers" who simply gushed at the mention of her name in my explaining who I was and why I was in their hall. My nervousness was further compounded on my first day as I was introduced to two of the organizers with whom I would be working. At about 6'10" and 6'5" respectively and covered in tattoos (I'll refrain from guessing their weight), they were truly intimidating. All this trepidation quickly faded, however, as their excitement at having a legal sounding-board in the office became evident.

My first task involved investigating the complex world of public bidding for construction projects, an area of the law I had to learn from scratch. I had to determine whether the union's interests had been affected by inappropriate action on the part of the awarding agency or any of the bidding contractors. My research culminated in the launching of a state-level investigation into the award.

My next tasks were to determine the levels and

extent of government funding in large construction projects, assessing the public and private character of organizations and the interrelation of this status with the construction process. My work was not intended to achieve immediate results but rather to be as comprehensive as possible for future reference.

I also worked with the organizers on issues ranging from basic labor law compliance to reviewing leafleting material and whatever else might come up in their day-to-day operations. Although the organizers were initially skeptical of the idea of having a "lawyer" around, they enthusiastically accepted me as part of their team after I demonstrated my willingness to attend a certification election at 5 a.m. or help inflate a giant rat on a picket line. After that, it seemed each time they explained my presence to someone new, my list of credentials grew tenfold. Most of my time was spent in their office, where I conducted my research, helped them with things like Board charges or Right to Know Act requests, and learned the basics of welding, "hanging duck," and the rest of their trade.

I was fortunate to have direct access to the local's President, Joe Sellers, who served as my supervisor for the fellowship. Although the demands on his time were constant, Mr. Sellers would still enthusiastically await my progress reports. He respected my assessments and seemed very glad that I was part of the team.

I also met each week with Bruce Endy, Local 19's counsel at Spear, Wilderman, Borish, Endy, Spear & Runckel. His faith in my work and reliance on its accuracy were extremely rewarding (though terrifying, given my greenness and the substantial gravity of the matters). He was quick to offer advice and has been an excellent mentor.

Local 19 asked me to stay on through the school year, and I did so enthusiastically. I am grateful for this opportunity to see the inner-workings of a local union and to participate actively in their cause. If not for The Peggy Browning Fund, I am sure I never would have had such an opportunity.

Peggy Browning

By Dennis P. Walsh, Member, NLRB and Secretary-Treasurer, PBF

The Peggy Browning Fund was established to carry on the work of Margaret A. Browning, a champion of workers' rights who was known to all her many friends as Peggy. Peggy Browning was a Member of the National Labor Relations Board from March 1994 until her untimely death at the age of 46 in February 1997.

Prior to her service on the Board, Peggy was a partner in the Philadelphia law firm known then as Spear, Wilderman, Borish, Endy, Browning and Spear, which represented unions and workers. She also had been a champion figure skater and a Judge with the U.S. Figure Skating Association, and she loved fine art, opera, theater, traveling, and fine restaurants, not to mention fine cars. But to those who knew Peggy, she was so much more than the sum of her accomplishments.

Peggy was a passionate advocate for the rights of



workers. She was proud of her distinction as the first attorney from the labor movement to be appointed to the NLRB. She was a founding partner of a prominent workers' rights law firm in Philadelphia. She was committed to her clients and to helping them navigate the difficult waters of labor law in order to effectively organize and represent the workers they served. She cared about all of her clients as people and as friends. She was passionate and eloquent in the courtroom and her intellect and knowledge of labor law were unsurpassed.

She firmly believed in the power of organizing and the effectiveness of true democracy and collective bargaining in the workplace. At the NLRB, the screen saver on her computer was emblazoned with the words from the preamble to the National Labor Relations Act: "...by encouraging the practice and procedure of collective bargaining..." She saw her service at the NLRB as a commitment to furthering that statutory purpose, so she wanted those words staring at her every day as she did her work.

Peggy was also a mentor and a friend. She was personally committed to encouraging law students and young lawyers with high ideals to work for the labor movement. She saw such work not only as a career, but also as a calling to work for a social cause, a cause with the ultimate goal of empowering workers through organizing to better their working lives.

At her law firm, Peggy always had time to listen to a young associate, whether to discuss a legal question, kick around strategies for approaching a case, or just to talk about how hard it often was for an idealist to survive in a law firm atmosphere. At the NLRB, her door was always open for staff members to come in and talk about the law, their cases, or to commiserate about how hard it sometimes was for an idealist to survive working for the United States government. Peggy was an accomplished "active

Upcoming Events - Mark Your Calendars

Watch our website for details.

October 2004 – Sixth Annual National Law Students Workers' Rights Conference in Silver Spring, MD.

November 2004 – Reception in Chicago, IL. Honorees to be announced.

January 2005 – Reception in New York City honoring **Randi Weingarten**, President of the United Federation of Teachers and a Vice-President of the American Federation of Teachers, and **Gene Eisner**, President of Eisner & Associates, attorney, teacher, speaker and author in the field of labor law.

March 2005 – Seventh Annual PBF Dinner Dance in Philadelphia, PA, honoring **James A. Williams**, General President of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades.

Continued on back page

The Peggy Browning Fund
1818 Market Street, Suite 2300
Philadelphia, PA 19103-3623
215 665-6815

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Peggy Browning

Continued from page 3

listener,” someone who could be at the same time sympathetic, empathetic, and a true friend when you really needed one.

It was Peggy’s role as friend and mentor to young lawyers and law students that inspired Joe Lurie to create The Peggy Browning Fund to perpetuate Peggy’s work and her legacy. The Fund was born out of a conversation that Joe had with Professor Clyde Summers of the University of Pennsylvania Law School, who was Peggy’s mentor in law school.

Joe suggested to Professor Summers that establishing a fund which would assist law students to find opportunities to work within the labor movement might be a fitting legacy for Peggy, and Professor Summers enthusiastically agreed. Joe proceeded to find a group of prominent practitioners in the labor movement to serve as an Advisory Board, and the Fund was born.

The Fund’s success has exceeded the expectations of all of those who have worked so hard to make it

happen. And through its contributions to the labor movement and to the law students it has served, it has helped to carry on the work of Peggy Browning, advocate for workers’ rights, mentor to law students and young lawyers, and true friend who touched the lives of so many people.

PBF Accepts Online Donations

We are now able to accept donations by credit card and online. Just go to our website, www.peggybrowningfund.org, look at the left-hand column listing each page on the site, and click on Make a Donation. Follow the instructions on the web page. This will take you to a secure site where you can enter your credit card information. You can use VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Diner’s Club, or Discover. Online donations help us reduce our administrative workload and enable us to devote more staff time to our programs.