

CALIFORNIA CHANGELAWYERS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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California Foundation Awarded Scholarships to 61 Diverse California Law Students and Honored Social Change Lawyers

October 5, Los Angeles – Last night, California ChangeLawyers, a statewide foundation dedicated to righting historical wrongs in courtrooms and classrooms, awarded scholarships to 61 bright, diverse law students. The students were selected in recognition of their promise to become tomorrow’s legal changemakers. In total, the foundation distributed close to \$400,000 to these 61 students.

Eric Holder, former US Attorney General and partner with the firm of Covington & Burling LLP, received the ChangeLawyer Award on behalf of his firm for their pro bono commitment to defend the rights of immigrant communities. He remarked, “The future of our profession is being recognized and honored at this great event: committed, diverse students who will fight for justice and equality. I am convinced that real, positive change is within the grasp of these brave young people and that they will change the world for the better.”

The scholars come from law schools all over the state of California. Almost two-thirds of the scholars were women, and nearly all of the scholars are first-generation law students. A full list of the scholars can be found here: <https://www.changelawyers.org/scholars.html>

California ChangeLawyers President Heather Linn Rosing, who is also a shareholder at Klinedinst PC, stated, “We are so proud of our amazing scholarship recipients. It has been such a pleasure to be a part of ChangeLawyers. Led by our incredible new Executive Director Chris Punongbayan, we are taking definitive action every day to provide access to justice to all Californians and to support our diverse law students.”

The scholars were selected by the foundation’s Board of Directors after a rigorous review process and were chosen because of their grit in overcoming adversity and demonstrated leadership. The application consisted of a detailed personal statement and recommendations, including law school faculty, private bar members, and judges. There were nearly 350 applications from across the state.

The foundation also gave ChangeLawyer Awards to Nina Shaw, one of the founders of the Time’s Up Legal Defense Fund and a partner at Del Shaw Moonves Tanaka Finkelstein &

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Lezcano and Leo Trujillo-Cox, Executive Director of the UCLA Law Fellows Program. All of

the awardees have shown fearless commitment to breaking the cycle of inequity and advancing systemic change for those who have been denied fairness and opportunity including immigrants, women, and people of color.

Nina Shaw stated the following about receiving the award, “Lawyers have traditionally stood in the front rows of the fight for equal justice, using the law as a weapon for change. I am humbled to stand on the ground held by so many before me.”

Leo Trujillo-Cox commented, “We believe in the transformative power and promise of lawyers to impact positive social change. While the UCLA Law Fellows Program was initially born out of a desire to contribute in deep and fundamental ways to UCLA Law’s twin pillars of access and excellence in legal education, we have come to a deeper understanding that a state as diverse as California should be led by advocates of all backgrounds. We are proud to be an incubator for aspiring law students and a champion of increased diversity in the legal profession.”

California ChangeLawyers Executive Director, Christopher Punongbayan, who received a scholarship from the foundation in 2003, remarked, “We are inspired by both our scholars and our honorees. This country needs diverse leaders who are fearless in their resolve. It is our privilege to be able to recognize them because they are legal changemakers committed to delivering the original American value: justice for all.”

The presentations of the scholarships and awards took place at LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes in downtown Los Angeles.

About California ChangeLawyers

California ChangeLawyers is a statewide foundation that empowers the next generation of lawyers, judges, and activists to create a more diverse legal profession, a fair justice system, and a better California. Founded in 1990, California ChangeLawyers was formerly California Bar Foundation.

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